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FROM NILE TO DON

RELIEF and admiration are the feelings with which most of us have read the news from Egypt during the past week. It is better than we had dared to hope, even if we have to add that everything is still in suspense. What happened when Rommel reached El Alamein in his headlong advance? First, it is a well-chosen position, since Nature defends both its flanks; on the North by the sea, on the South by the morasses of the Quattara depression. Secondly, the R.A.F. has thrown in all it had, achieved for the time being a decided superiority in the air, and used it to destroy the enemy's supplies as they traversed the exposed coast-road. Better still, it has put out of action, for a time, the repairing station for tanks which Rommel had established at Mersa Matruh. Then our infantry, more especially the New Zealanders, has fought with stubborn gallantry. Finally, it is clear that Auchinleck has assembled big reinforcements, including the newly arrived Americans,

The number and quality of his infantry should give him some advantage, since only half of Rommel's men are Germans.

The enemy may have risked his first attack with inferior numbers of men; unfortunately, he still has superiority in the number and quality of his tanks and guns. But he has now been compelled to wait for the arrival of reinforcements and supplies. Some of these arrive by sea or air at Tobruk, three hundred miles away, and some at Mersa Matruh, while others traverse all Libya, and even, it is said, Tunisia by road. There are not surprising signs that some of his men are exhausted. The attack began with the usual hammering of a wedge into our formations. This had an initial success, for an Indian Brigade suffered heavily and gave ground. Then came the splendid rally of our defenders. Rommel failed altogether to enlarge his wedge. Its northern edge was held; its southern edge curled inwards. On this there followed a pause, and though there are reports that Rommel is digging in, he is no doubt also massing his armour for a second and possibly heavier attack. The British, meanwhile, have gained time and confidence, and it may be assumed that we, like our enemies, are still bringing up reinforcements. The issue is in suspense.

On the Russian Front the big summer offensive is at last in full swing. It was delayed, no doubt, by the extraordinary defence of Sevastopol, which held out long after anything less than Russian faith and devotion would have surrendered with honour. The German plan is again a pincers movement. The northern claw has advanced due east from Kursk towards Voronezh and the Don. The southern claw should curve north eastwards from below Kharkov. If the pincers could time their encircling moves accurately, they might enclose a big Russian army. But the timing seems to be going wrong. The northern advance on a relatively short front with overwhelming forces was a success. The Russians admit a withdrawal.

The German claim that the big city of Voronezh has fallen appears premature, though some Germans seem now to be established on the left bank of the Don. The Russian statement that some of their forces are still fighting west of the Don is not necessarily a contradiction. If Voronezh is lost, it will be rather harder to keep the crucial positions round Rostov, on the road to the Caucasus, supplied. The Moscow-Rostov railway is cut and the Don also, but other roundabout routes are still available. If this is unfortunate, the Russians are, on the other hand, holding back the advance of the southern claw with better success and are inflicting great losses on the enemy. As in Egypt, the plan of the German operations is at last disclosed, but the result is, and for long may remain, in suspense. The Upper Don is not in modern warfare a very serious obstacle. The German advance would become really dangerous only if it were to threaten the narrow belt between the bend of the Don and the Volga. But that, at the worst, lies far ahead. Timoshenko is known to have great reserves which he can throw into this battle. What we may reasonably expect before long is a formidable Russian counter-offensive.

A desultory debate continues in the press and at question time in the Commons over the cause of the Libyan disaster. Was it defective armour and guns, or was it poor generalship? Each, in our opinion, played its part, though the latter seems to have been the more important.

The view we expressed last week of Air Ministry responsibility seems in some quarters to have been misunderstood. The question is one of general strategy. We made it clear, we hope, that we were not criticising the R.A.F. as a body; it displayed, as we said, in Libya, and as it is now doing in Egypt, the energy and gallantry which it never lacks. But we contend, firstly, that operations must suffer from the lack of a single command. Mr. Churchill's answer to a question on Tuesday confirmed our statement of the facts. The Air Force in the Middle East is not under General Auchinleck's command, though when "a battle is in prospect" it gives him "all possible aid irrespective of other targets." This apparently means that it goes its own way and chooses its own objectives, subject to interruption during a battle and on its eve. A less defensible arrangement could hardly be imagined. It is much as if a colonel of artillery were allowed to locate his batteries and choose his targets at his own discretion during twenty days in every month, while submitting to the senior general on the remaining ten. If that does not mean hopeless chaos, it is because the two men are much better than the inexcusable system. Our own contention was that the Air Ministry exaggerates the value of bombing raids on German towns, and has been unwilling to release its bombers for more urgent operations elsewhere. We instanced the failure for many months to bomb the port of Tripoli, on which Rommel largely depends for his reinforcements by sea. We might have added other instances. The submarines continue to prey on our shipping, as it crosses the Atlantic, partly because the Navy cannot get from the Air Ministry enough long-range bombers to cope with it. Again, the Chinese are sore because they are still awaiting the arrival of British bombers promised long ago. In this instance it is reported that the ground staff and equipment arrived several weeks ago, but the bombers are held up.

We do not claim that all these demands could have been fully met. What impresses us is that all are stinted, in order to furnish the thousand-bomber raids on Germany, which are, in fact feasible only under rare atmospheric conditions.

The letter from a well-informed correspondent on this issue, which we print elsewhere, introduces no new factor, but emphasises one consolation which is sufficient to explain one of these instances, but only one. It is true that while bombers are flown to Egypt with ease, the ground crews and equipment make the long voyage round the Cape and depend on the allocation of our limited tonnage. To this it might be answered that transport planes, the manufacture of which in far larger quantities is one of our urgent needs, could serve for this purpose at least in part. But the real answer is that no such difficulty will account for stinting of the Navy's needs or of China's. The root of the trouble is the Ministry's belief in the value of the indiscriminate bombing of German towns. We are aware that we touch here on a fierce inter-departmental argument on the technicalities of which no outsider can pronounce with confidence. All we can do is to repeat that this obsession explains why other activities go short of planes; that it is admitted that no great results can follow from raids on Germany unless they can be continuous, as well as on the heaviest scale yet conceived, and that for technical reasons these conditions seem as yet unobtainable. In the meantime the war may be lost or won on the present battlefields.

The Wheat Agreement

The international wheat agreement which was publicly announced on Friday is the first visible result of the consultations which have been going on for some time past about post-war relief for the peoples whose territories have been overrun. The first feature of the agreement is the provision by the four great producing countries—United States, Canada, Australia and the Argentine—in conjunction with Great Britain, of a buffer wheat pool of one hundred million bushels, or more if needed, for the supply of areas threatened by famine after their liberation from enemy control. Great Britain is nominally responsible for one-quarter of the pool; but the British share is intended to be given in the form of transport from the producing to the consuming areas. The agreement further provides for the fixing of maximum prices, at or below which the producing countries will guarantee supplies, and for a system of controlled production and export quotas, designed to stabilise the post-war wheat trade. It will be observed that the Soviet Union, which is also an important producer, is not a party to the agreement, and that India has also been left outside. The exclusion of the main European producers is unavoidable under present conditions, as Hungary and Rumania are the two chief exporting areas in Europe. But there is a provision whereby the United States undertakes to call a wider conference as soon as conditions allow, for the purpose of drafting a more detailed and inclusive plan. The present agreement is temporary; but it is evidently intended to make it the basis of a permanent system of international regulation, on lines that were under discussion before the war. The practical effectiveness of the scheme now approved will depend on two things—on common sense in fixing maximum prices and quotas, and on the availability of transport to move the pooled wheat promptly from the places where it is stored to the famine areas. It is to be hoped that parallel agreements will be speedily arrived at for other commodities which will be needed for the relief of famine, and that the same method will be extended to providing for the supply of seeds and fertilisers, livestock for breeding, and other things needed for speedy restoration of productive power in the devastated countries.

The "Public Schools"

The President of the Board of Education has set up a committee to consider the future of the so-called "public schools." But neither the terms of the announcement nor the membership encourage one to feel that the problem is likely to be tackled in the right way. The future of the "public schools" cannot be sensibly considered as an isolated problem; for it ought to depend on what it is proposed to make of the post-war educational system as a whole. It will be intolerable if, in return for submitting to Board inspection (where they are not already doing so) and admitting a small proportion of boys and girls from State elementary schools, the "public schools" are allowed to get away with enough public money to save them from the bankruptcy with which a good many of them are threatened. If, as seems certain, there are many fewer parents after the war who can afford to send their children to expensive boarding schools without State aid, that is at the very least a reason why the State, if it decides to give the aid, ought to insist on the "public schools" coming right in to the educational system, instead of standing proudly aloof from it. If there is a case for boarding schools—a case, I mean, consistent with democratic principles—such schools ought to be laid wide open to children irrespective of their parents' incomes; and not merely to a few, but to as many as are expected to benefit by them. There is a great deal to be said for the view that it would be much better for a large number of boys and girls to have, say, two years in a boarding school than for a much smaller number to have six or seven years. But it does not look as if Mr. Butler meant his committee to go into this sort of question, or to consider at all the place which the "public schools" ought to occupy in a really reorganised educational system. This is Mr. Butler's third committee on one little bit of the big problem of post-war education; whereas what is needed is, first of all, a broad determination of democratic principles and only in the second place a series of particular inquiries into the separate parts of the educational machine.

Home Front (*by an Industrial Correspondent.*)

Are wages too high? Are they seriously out of step as between one industry and another? Are they out of hand, and hurrying us towards an inflationary crisis? The figures just published by the Ministry of Labour, showing average earnings in most of the principal industries in January of this year, get as near as we are likely to get to an answer to these and other questions about the wage-situation. The returns do not cover all industries, coal mining and railways being outside the range of the inquiry on which they are based; but they do give a good general picture. The figures, it should be noted, are for earnings and not for wage-rates, and therefore include overtime and piece-work payments. They show separately the weekly earnings of men over 21, women over 18, boys and youths, and girls. The general averages for these four categories, spread over all the industries covered, were £5 3s. 5d., £2 8s. 0d., £2 1s. 11d., and £1 6s. 11d., with an inclusive average of £3 18s. 3d. The comparative figures for October, 1938, the last pre-war date for which comparable details are available, were £3 9s. 0d., £1 12s. 6d., £1 6s. 1d., 18s. 6d., and an all-over average of £2 13s. 3d. In other words, men's earnings had risen by 48 per cent., women's by 46 per cent., boys and youths by 63 per cent., and girls by 45 per cent., with a general average rise of 46 per cent. It has to be borne in mind that the figures for men are partly the result of "upgrading." The number of men in industry has fallen sharply, whereas the number of women has been rising fast, the men who are left having been largely upgraded to the better-paid jobs. Boys and youths, too, have profited by the scarcity of male labour, and many of them have been moved up to jobs on which they are receiving adult wages. When account is taken of these factors and of the large amount of overtime that was being worked when the returns were made, the increases seem very moderate, except in the case of boys and youths, who constitute a special problem.

* * *

The widely prevalent impression that runaway rises in earnings have been common is mistaken. In general wage advances have been very moderate, when allowance is made for overtime work and the increased speed of piecework output under war conditions. If the trade unions had seriously tried to make full use of their bargaining power, there would be a very different tale to tell. As matters stood in January, the trouble was not that *average* earnings were high, but that the distribution was very uneven—a fact which the use of averages necessarily conceals. The tales about skilled workmen who find their novice daughters earning more than themselves are no doubt true; but they represent only a tiny fraction of the total. The wage-system is in a good deal of a muddle; but there are quite as many cases of low as of high payments.

The Propaganda Debate (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The debate on the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and "Certain services connected with Propaganda," was like a woolly cloud through which only very occasional scraps of clear illumination could be seen. There were a few strokes of wit and a few bright ideas. The Minister gave some interesting figures about his shadow factory of opinion, in which an odd process is taking place, the organisation of local instruments for the expression of opinion and of the news, the M.O.I. committees, and for the international spread of news and opinions over a broadcasting network of ether waves in 43 foreign languages for 275 hours each week in which three million words are spoken. To which must be added leaflets dropped by the R.A.F., a newspaper in Moscow and sundry other enterprises.

The fact that the country for information purposes is divided into 12 regions, with 420 local information committees was explained in the statement which Mr. Thurtle deliberately read to the House. This is a new and powerful organ of opinion. It is these committees which can give you, and do give you, on local notice boards, details of casualties in air raids—who know of labour difficulties, of absenteeism, of local heroism and local invasion organisation. The press only gets the censored stories, the truncated stories and very little of the opinions. "You want the news; we keep it," might be the local M.O.I. Committee slogan. It would be interesting and useful to the war effort to give the news out much more freely.

Mr. Vernon Bartlett, in a speech full of suggestion, commended the present broadcasts to Europe, and there seems no doubt they have much improved of late. But he condemned our broadcasts to the United States. For this service there is no diplomatic correspondent collecting news, as there is for the European service; there are no regular conferences between the director and members of the staff; and there is no proper planning committee like the Political Warfare Executive. The officials, "young and rather inexperienced," do not get, according to Bartlett, the necessary directions, and they become more and more timid. The result is "intolerable interference with the expression of opinion."

Perhaps the reason for these differences is that we do know what to say to Europe—that is, so to speak, all black or white—but we do not know what to say to the United States. Propaganda is a word derived, as Mr. Pickthorn reminded the House, from the Committee set up by one of the Popes, "De Propaganda Fide," a faith defined and redefined and finally summed up by "the stupendous Aquinas." Have we not got a faith of that kind? Is the New World we are so industrially building in the complex organisations we are, almost unconsciously, creating not clearly seen and known by us?

Mr. Brendan Bracken said the M.O.I. in its beginning was a sort of Heath Robinson construction and it still keeps the marks of that not far-off time.

True it may be that, as Harold Nicolson said, the British public is allergic to propaganda. But being allergic, like patriotism, is not enough. We want fresh news, clear-cut political thinking and sunlight and clean winds to blow all through the M.O.I. and its local committees and over the ether waves in its 43 languages.

COMMON NEEDS AND COMMON SENSE

POLITICAL warfare is easy when battles are being won and difficult in a period of retreat. For that reason many believe that at a time like this no propaganda is worth doing. The illusion rests on a total misconception of the functions of political warfare. True, without success on the battlefield no spectacular successes will be achieved by broadcasting, leaflet dropping or ministerial statements, but that is no more a reason for not developing and persisting in a line of political warfare than it is for abandoning the manufacture of war weapons because an army has been defeated. The job is still to build up confidence in our power and knowledge of the objects for which we are fighting. In times of success a larger proportion of the two hundred million people, whom Mr. Brendan Bracken estimates as the number of B.B.C. listeners abroad, will be impressed by what we say; in bad times, if our assurance in our capacity to fulfil our promises is unshaken that is in itself good propaganda to a watchful world.

The second argument of the sceptic about political warfare is that since we do not know what the world will be like after the war, and since the United Nations are very disunited about what they want, discussion of post-war policy is in itself futile and only likely to sow discord. This argument seems to be based on a misconception that political warfare must deal in terms of opposing ideologies or disputed frontiers. Again, it is not true that there is no common basis of propaganda which can be put forward from Washington, London and Moscow. The basis is vaguely in the Atlantic Charter and the Anglo-Soviet Treaty—if politicians were not too frightened to have the implication of those documents explained to the mass of suffering humanity. If Mr. Churchill could be persuaded by the example of men like Mr. Henry Wallace in the U.S.A. we might still see Britain taking her proper place as a leader of the United Nations in creating a unified idea. The creation of such a unifying idea might help to bring victory more swiftly than now seems possible and then make victory something more than the dust and ashes which the last one proved to be.

Propaganda should be based on an analysis of the wants of the people to whom it is addressed, combined with a careful consideration of how far these wants can be met and how far the promises to meet them can be made convincing. We do not know what the political shape of Europe will be when the war comes to an end; we can foresee, however, with quite adequate clarity, what people both in the occupied countries and in Germany will most want when Hitler's Germany collapses. There will be raging clashes of national feeling, there will be groups intent on revenge and national advantage. But the overwhelming facts amongst the great mass of men and women will be hunger and a desire for freedom and for social security. Mr. Roosevelt has spoken of the four freedoms, and two freedoms, from want and fear, have found their way into the Atlantic Charter. But how make these vague phrases actual? Let us put these desires into the concise terms of everyday life. People in the occupied countries want first to get rid of the *Gauleiter* who takes their goods, tramples on their customs and shoots their bravest citizens. Point one. We promise to end the domination of the Nazis. What else do people on the Continent want, whether they are Dutchmen, Czechs, Frenchmen, Norwegians or Italians? They want to be adequately fed; and after the war they will probably also want to be saved from the diseases that come from malnutrition, and the pestilence which threaten Europe devastated by years of war. The second war aim for Europe, therefore, is simply the means of life: salvation from famine and pestilence. The third goes farther. It is a guarantee that in the future they shall be fed and healthy. Sometimes this aim is called "social security." It includes the provision of houses, the rebuilding of factories, the re-organisation of life free from the fear of want and unemployment. Lastly there is the fundamental desire for personal freedom. The common man wants to know that he can sit in the café without a secret agent listening to what he says. He wants freedom from the spy, freedom to talk. To us this sounds elementary; some imagine that it is only in Germany and Italy that men before the war lacked this freedom. In fact men have lived in more or less degrees of terror in many where authoritarianism did not openly wear the black shirt and carry the rubber truncheon.

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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All these promises can be given concrete reality in our propaganda if they are understood and if we make plans to fulfil them. The oppressed peoples of the Continent can know that the food they need will actually come to them as soon as they rid themselves of Nazi rule; it would help to convince them of our sincerity if in a clear voice Ministers would say that British people know that rationing will continue here after the war. There are a hundred ways of giving reality to these promises. Are we, for instance, still talking in terms of a return to the pre-war absurdities in matters of exchange, or are we capable of developing an international currency? Can we, in a word, look like people who are capable not only of victory but also of the organising of life in terms of common sense without which victory will mean nothing to millions of those whom we boast of liberating?

Two practical cases for Europe come at once to our minds. In the U.S.A. we have heard good talk of "a T.V.A. for the Danube Valley." That means that just as seven States in America were content to accept a vast non-profit-making scheme of development which had as its object the general welfare, so in the impoverished Balkans the sovereignty of nations can be overcome provided we tackle not the legal absurdities but the practical details of everyday need. Vested interests, not States, resisted in America: the same problem could appear and could be similarly solved in Europe provided that Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed in telling the Balkan peoples of the future offered them. Again, the Archbishop of Canterbury made suggestions this week about the industry of the Ruhr. Short reports of his speech might suggest that he advocated a permanent occupation of the centre of Europe's wealth by British and United States capital. In fact he appears to have suggested a non-profit making, international public liability development of the Ruhr.

Propaganda on such lines has a universal appeal. It solves the problem of the home morale whose neglect was discussed in the House of Commons debate last Tuesday. Try any audience of ordinary people in this country. Try telling them that things are going to be the same after the war. They won't believe you. Try telling them that the Government is determined to make things better. They will smile and say they remember "homes for heroes." Try telling them that things will be very bad any way, and that rationing and many other restrictions which they dislike will have to continue because all peoples will be in the same boat and we shall all have painfully to begin rebuilding our civilisations. Tell them details of actual salvage plans, urge full consultation with Stalin and Roosevelt, and lay the emphasis on change and hardship and the future adventure of constructive effort and the lecturer will bring the house down. That applies in the Services and in the factories alike. Once again note that only the conception of a people's war and a common man's peace will enable us to make an impression in the United States or in China or in the Empire. Mr. Brendan Bracken, we gratefully note, told the House that he had sent no "socialite" to speak for us in the U.S.A. A negative triumph of common sense. Unfortunately he could not add that he had been able to promote the British cause there in any decisive way. Why? Because the British case is not in itself clear or decided. Every visitor agrees with Mr. Vernon Bartlett's account of its deplorable lack of drive and interest. They agree that we still look like an Imperial Power, that we still have no answer to those who complain that they are being asked to fight to increase the British Empire once again. They ask for proof that Britain in this war is already on the way to greater equality, that we are indeed fighting a People's War. That is what the Chinese say too: it is because Mr. Churchill showed that he was in fact still as much an Imperialist as ever that U. Saw left this country an enemy and that the Burmese were not more interested in opposing the Japanese. There is no proof of any of these fine phrases, unless we are able to produce a programme which will fit into the century of the common man—a phrase which now means something positive in the Soviet Union, something hopeful in the United States, something wistfully desired in the United Kingdom, and something that still looks like hypocrisy amongst the subject peoples of the Empire. Here is the true unity of the United Nations. They fight a common enemy, and the common enemy is not just the rulers of Germany, Italy and Japan. Their enemy is an economic and social muddle which denies to the common man freedom, peace, security and a full share of the good things which his labour helps to produce.

EPITAPH ON A SYSTEM

NO one doubted that Mr. Churchill would get an overwhelming majority in last week's censure debate; but no one is likely to argue seriously that the Government emerged with credit from it. Mr. Lyttelton told a dismal story of production muddle. Mr. Churchill, in one of those Pitt-like orations in which he turns defeat on the field of battle into a rhetorical triumph, combined congratulation to the House on its maintenance of free discussion with fierce attack upon his critics for encouraging our enemies; his main revelation was that neither he nor General Auchinleck expected the fall of Tobruk. The ablest speech in the discussion was made by Mr. Aneurin Bevan, who pointed out that had Rommel been in the British Army he would, in all probability, be a sergeant like that member of the International Brigade who planned the victory of the Ebro in the Spanish Civil War.

No one who reads the debate as a whole can avoid the suspicion that what is really at stake in these discussions is the purpose for which this war is being fought, which is, in its turn, the outcome of Mr. Churchill's conception of the nature of the war. Much as William Pitt fought to preserve the system then in being against a revolutionary idea which Napoleon symbolised, so Mr. Churchill is fighting to preserve the system now in being against the counter-revolutionary idea embodied in Hitlerism. His anxiety is to win it with men and measures which do not touch the foundations of our society. If he can hold Hitler at bay until all the resources of America are fully mobilised, he can count on a victory which will make it unnecessary, during the war, to raise any of those controversial issues discussion of which might disturb the *status quo*. That is why all the main war-controls are staffed as they are. That is why the railway and mining industries are not made to confront their future. That is why we have not decisions about the future of education but committees to examine the problems about which decisions must be made. That is why reconstruction is not the task of a Minister of first-rate status, but rather of a kind of superior under-secretary who initiates inquiries about which decisions may one day be made. Sir Stafford Cripps is the only outsider who has managed to "gate-crash" into an important diplomatic post. Not a single person outside the ranks of the professionals has (so differently from the last war) attained the status of a Brigadier. The appointments to colonial governorships and similar posts all follow the classic model. The traditional civil servants have retained or obtained all the pivotal administrative positions. Save for some minor exceptions, the historic governing class of Britain is in full directive control of the war effort. Even its charities (including the fund to aid the Soviet Union) remain under the wonted aristocratic patronage.

It is this, I suggest, that must be set in the context of our reverse in Libya if its meaning is to be fully understood. For this war is in its essence a stage merely in an immense revolution in which the war of 1914, the Russian Revolution and the counter-revolutions on the Continent are earlier phases. It is terminating the epoch of liberal democracy which received its letters of credit in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and, almost everywhere, brought the middle class to power. Liberal democracy has broken down because its motivating principles make it unable to explore the full possibilities of the productive capacity at our disposal. All the classic symptoms of a revolution have been present amongst us now for many years. The traditional values are on the defensive. The historic ruling class has lost faith in itself. Reason and tolerance are both of them at a discount. The wonted securities are gone and, with them, the traditional optimism which marks a system in its period of expansion. There is a growth of mysticism and of escape into esoteric cults. Doctrines no longer search for the basis of compromise but arm themselves for battle. There is a gulf between youth and age which no common faith is able to bridge. We are watching the erosion of a whole culture. A way of life is dying, and the character of its successor has not yet been determined.

To meet the challenge of that counter-revolution which is Hitlerism the Churchill Government needed, above all, to define the new way of life for the next age. But by the very conception of the war that it has formed it cannot attempt that task. Its constitutional status—the election of 1935—inhibits it from any fundamental innovation. It is therefore timid of new men and, even more, of new ideas. Its chief object is to maintain national unity upon a basis which does not threaten—as the issue of property always threatens—its power to use the national idea as a plaster with which temporarily to cover up the profound disintegration of the old regime which has in fact occurred. It is willing, of course, to promise; but it dare not take the risk of fulfilment. The Conservative Party supports it because the alternative is reduction to the status of a second-rate Power; the fate of France is constantly before its eyes. The Labour Party supports it because the victory of Hitlerism so clearly means the enslavement of the masses. The tacit agreement between both is that no dangerous questions shall be raised which might cause any powerful vested interest to slacken in its enthusiasm for victory. Novelty and experiment cannot be on its order-paper since these would call into question the basis upon which its authority rests.

Yet no one can examine our situation without the clear perception that history has itself called that basis into question. Totalitarian war is compatible, as Germany and Italy make clear, with a regime in which the masses are terrorised into acquiescence in tyranny. It is not compatible with a political democracy which must function on the implied understanding that it does not affirm its own essence. The roots of the Churchill system are in a soil that is already and obviously exhausted. It promises to try anything that may be necessary for victory; but it accompanies this with an assurance to the main beneficiaries of the old order that their privileges shall remain untouched when the very essence of the conflict is the status of those privileges. It is therefore bound to work within a framework which gives those beneficiaries the guarantee that the assurance is valid. So we tinker with the problem of coal; we promise the shipowners the sale of Government-built ships at the end of the war; our regional controllers of production are a selected sample of the Directory of Directors. Even the B.B.C. is prohibited from the forthright discussion of war-aims lest there be alarm and despondency in the ranks of the privileged.

The Churchill Government, in short, is seeking to use an obsolete economic and social system, the popular belief in which has already gone, for ends which transcend its possibilities. The great virtues of the Prime Minister are well known, but to achieve their end they need to be built upon premises he is not permitted to consider. He must use the men and the measures upon which the whole history of civilisation since Versailles is a decisive and final commentary. As the younger Pitt fought the Napoleonic wars with the men and the methods of the eighteenth century, so Mr. Churchill and his colleagues are condemned to fight Hitlerism with the men and the methods of 1914. It was symptomatic of his position that his chief Conservative critic should propose the Duke of Gloucester as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army at a time of revolutionary innovation in the technique of war. It is symptomatic of his position, also, that at a time when the future of democracy depends, as never before, on our ability to set freedom in the context of equal opportunity, the public schools and the Churches should be able to conduct vast defensive operations to protect vested interests which, in the educational sphere, have been an ugly anachronism this last half-century. Is it accident that, at this time, schemes are being eagerly canvassed for the transfer to private hands of publicly owned electricity undertakings?

The reverse in Libya was not the fault of Mr. Churchill or General Ritchie. It would not have been a victory if the office of Prime Minister were separated from that of Minister of Defence. Even the transformation of the present War Cabinet into an institution on the Lloyd-George model would not have altered the event. The reverse in Libya is an epitaph upon a system. It is the natural and logical outcome of the effort to wage a revolutionary war without revolutionary means. It is the necessary consequence of a Government which seeks to revitalise a society that is dying instead of being urgent to hasten the birth of the society that is seeking to be born. The long series of disasters with which this Government is associated points to a fundamental defect in the constitutive principle by which it lives. The heroism and endurance of its people, aided by the resolution of Russia and the resources of America, may enable it to share, despite that defect, in victory. But when the enemy has been broken the defect will still remain.

Nearly a hundred years ago Renan, who had seen in the June days of 1848 the effort of the Fourth Estate to vindicate its claims, said that a nation which debates the social question is lost. That is the central conviction of every class which, having come to the possession of the State, sees its title again called into question. There is a sense in which the fall of France is due to nothing so much as the efforts of its bourgeoisie to deny the logic of the Revolution which gave it power; for the essence of democracy is, after all, quite simply the social question. No more than the Government of France can the Churchill Government wage a war for democracy and seek so to wage it that the social question is evaded. When it does so, it is compelled to refrain from using the men and the ideas that the defence of democracy requires. That is what Mr. Churchill and his colleagues are doing. The end they seek contradicts the methods they employ; France, Malaya, Burma, Libya, are the outcome of that contradiction. They can only transcend it when they call the masses into partnership. For victory now depends upon the full understanding that the masses are the plaintiff in this war.

HAROLD J. LASKI

MOSCOW LETTER

(CABLE FROM OUR MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT)

Monday, July 6th.

IT is strange to write about this war from Moscow. Everything seems so peaceful and quiet here. Last winter's air-raids are but a distant memory and life goes on extraordinarily normally for a city a hundred miles from the nearest German position. Food conditions are not particularly good. Rations are smaller than ours at home, and above all bread is rationed, which makes a great difference to the bulk of food consumed by the average Russian and Englishman. But life goes on normally. Tramcars are packed as ever with people; one hears more or less good-natured exchanges such as "Why are you standing on my feet?" answer, "Where do you expect me to stand—on your face?"

For the comic opera *Sylva* at Ermitage Garden you have got to book a week ahead and if opera singers and ballet dancers have departed to Volga towns there is still at the opera a competent *ensemble* playing Korsakov's *Tsar's Bride* and *Tosca, Traviata, Onegin* and *The Barber of Seville* to packed houses with enthusiastic young girls bringing down the house. At the sumptuous Actors' Club there are concerts of Slav music preceded by lectures on unity and future co-operation between Slav peoples, and Jewish infant prodigies fiddle away at Dvorak and Tchaikovsky and Wieniawski. There are also various manifestations of Anglo-Russian cultural *rapprochement*—a good new Russian ballet, the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and which was rather worse, an evening of British music at the Actors' Club. The American Ambassador and Admiral Miles, head of the British Military Mission, were there, and other distinguished British and Russian personalities and also dozens of Russians of that unvarying international type, the elderly female concertgoer. After a lecture by a professor of music on the glories of Handel and Purcell, the performers played Cyril Scott and selections from *The Geisha* which persuaded Russians we might for all they knew turn out good allies, but were not much of a musical nation.

Yesterday afternoon in the Park of Rest and Culture, Sunday crowds in their Sunday best were numerous as ever. There were tank traps in some of the approaches, remnant of the dark days of October, and at the buffets nothing was to be had except soda-water, which however was in great demand that hot day. In the childrens' park, however, carton cups of milk were available for the very young. The lake was crowded with rowing boats. There were also crowds for the side-shows such as an exhibition of Reyasnaya Polyana and the filthy sadistic mess the Germans made thereof. Under the hangar hundreds of little Russian boys were having the time of their lives playing hide and seek under the wings and in the cockpits of shot-down Heinkels and Junkers and tearing off bits of the monsters' wings and screws and bolts and electrical fittings and making a thorough mess of German planes to the tolerant amusement of militiamen; one huge Heinkel the kids had de-gutted altogether.

Sebastopol, after what is unquestionably the most glorious chapter of this war, was finally captured after eight months' siege and twenty-five days' inconceivable hell of shelling and dive bombing in which the city was razed to the ground with hardly an inch which was not battered by shells day and night. The fall of Sebastopol was naturally expected and it held out longer than could be measured by any known standards of human endurance. Black Sea marines and soldiers definitely preferred death in battle to the obscene captivity of slow death which the Germans reserve for Russians. There was, too, in Sebastopol the historical glamour of the Crimean war which added incentive. These men wanted to go down in history as the most heroic fighters of this war. Russia thinks with love and gratitude of Sebastopol's sacrifice. It is not a black but a glorious page in Russian history. But there have been other worries. The battle of Kursk and Bielgorod sectors are of a fierceness and intensity nothing has equalled hitherto. Undoubtedly these are "local" thrusts, but Churchill was wrong to dismiss them lightly and with a touch of irony. (For that matter Churchill's figure of two thousand tanks as the total we have sent to Russia does not greatly impress the people of Moscow.) The Germans have thrown in thousands of tanks and there is a limit to what the magnificent Russian artillery can do—for it is on artillery rather than on tanks they often depend—to repel, halt or localise German thrusts. More and more tanks are being thrown in daily by the Germans who are trying desperately to widen the front fan-wise after their big initial thrust, and moreover, to join the Kursk fan and the Bielgorod fan and so outstrip the Russians and overrun their defence in depth. The object of this operation is only too clear. It is to cut the Russian communications which supply the Russian armies. The north-to-south line, Yeletz to Kupiansk, is already largely overrun and now they are likely to retake much of the Kitaller main north to south railway line linking Central Russia with Voronezh and Rostov and hence with the Caucasus.

If this goes on only the overworked Stalingrad line will remain. It would be grim development, affecting Russian supplies and the whole economic machine of the Russian army and rear and also tending to cut the Red Army in two—something the Germans tried last year, but unsuccessfully. All that human endurance can do—and there's nothing like the endurance of the Red Army—is being done, but the danger is unquestionably great and will be greater if the Voronezh line goes. German mobility will be much increased at the expense of Russian mobility. The Soviet Press to-day isn't mincing words. Thus *Izvestia*, in a passage which may not have received all the attention it deserves abroad: "The threat which the German Fascist scoundrels have brought to our country has not passed. As on the first day of the war, so to-day it is a matter of the life and death of the Soviet State, the life and death of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. It is a question whether the peoples of the Soviet Union should be free or become slaves. The enemy is cruel and inexorable. The atrocities committed by the German Fascist fiends are not dying down and these beasts' crimes are multiplying daily." It is about as grim a warning as has appeared in the Soviet Press since the dark days of the autumn when the Germans were at the gates of Moscow. What is the meaning? Unquestionably there is anxiety and impatience with Britain. Tobruk has had a deplorable effect. They do know that there is no time to waste. What happens in the next few weeks here and in Egypt will have far-reaching effect one way or the other, not only militarily, but politically. What about Turkey and Japan? Is it in vain that the *Izvestia* editorial which described in the above terms the gravity of the situation also said "the enormous resources and productive potential of our country, Britain and the U.S.A. are inexhaustible and create the essential conditions for victory. But possibility is not reality. To achieve victory it is essential fully to mobilise and utilise these resources." The meaning is only too clear. Britain and America, in the Soviet view, must find a way of drawing off German forces from Russia. Russia has paid a gigantic price in human lives and suffering and they are expecting us to realise that victory doesn't come by itself, as *Izvestia* pointedly puts it.

1001 war uses for your
Dead Paper

THE MALTESE PEOPLE

[The author of this article is a Maltese who has been leader of the Maltese Labour Party.]

A TINY island, 17 miles long, 9 miles wide, covering an area of about 95 square miles. It has gazed with disinterested impartiality and pitiful derision on the contending camps that strove for its possession. Trodden heavily underfoot by successive hordes of Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Normans, Spaniards, Knights Hospitalers and Napoleonic partisans, it has never failed to grin when all that was left of their glorious presence was dust. Indeed, many came, very few stayed: the original settlers, hardy, peace-loving Phoenicians, were determined to keep their rocky sunburnt land for themselves. What secret remedies, what subtle subterfuges were adopted to eliminate foreign infiltration will be the task of some leisurely historian to unravel. But how can we explain the fact that the Maltese people, the smallest in existence, have succeeded in preserving throughout thousands of years their ancient language, their customs, their peculiar way of thinking?

Once upon a time the Italian Fascists perceived a few borrowed terms in the Maltese vocabulary; they knew very well that no language can claim to be absolutely undiluted: they thought, however, that this flimsy evidence would be sufficient for their purpose. Accordingly they acclaimed the Maltese people as their newly found brethren and the Fascist Grand Council instructed their servile press that henceforth Malta must always be referred to as "terra irredenta." The island had just freed itself from the cumbersome chains of antiquated imperialism; its people were enjoying the boisterous, exciting and fruitful days of self-government; they were not fettered by the narrow diplomatic considerations that in the years previous to this catastrophic war earned for Britain the resounding mockery of her real friends. A Maltese government, elected by the Maltese people, abolished the Italian language from the Law Courts and in so doing they achieved two main objects: they revealed to Signor Mussolini the unwillingness of the Maltese people to share the benefits of his castor-oil civilisation by voluntarily joining the brotherhood of slaves; they also rent asunder a feudal cobweb which a paternal Colonial Office had never found the time, the energy and the courage to remove. For over a hundred and twenty years British governors deemed it fitting that, in an island where less than 1 per cent. of the population can understand Italian, the official language of the Courts should remain Italian. It must be made clear that the question was not purely literary: it meant that the unfortunate suspect tried for murder was unable to understand one word of what the public prosecutor or the counsel for the defence was saying. The Maltese people who until quite lately (1937) were told by the House of Commons that they could not be trusted to decide what is best for themselves discovered that Maltese was more appropriate in an institution which is considered to be the seat of justice.

It would be amusing to know whether the British Government, Sir Stafford Cripps included, considers the decision of the Maltese people to withstand with stoic forbearance the uninterrupted and barbarous onslaught of Nazi and Fascist bombers and to point their accurate gunfire towards Italian E-boats instead of directing it against Imperialist battleships as sufficiently clever to pass the intelligence test which, it is presumed, the Colonial Office, that fountain of wisdom, was supposed to set to these uncouth natives, and return self-government to a people whose voice cannot be heard in English constituencies.

English reformists find it difficult to understand why a people who have so little to lose should willingly submit to such terrible ordeals; the Ministry of Information and the B.B.C. are to blame for this artificial lacuna: the Ministry of Information has taken infinite pains to stress the loyalty of the Maltese people but its vague statements have conveyed the erroneous impression that these brave islanders are ready to die out of sheer gratitude for services rendered them in the past. The harm done by these unscrupulous innuendoes is not confined to the Maltese Islands: basing their logic on these absurd fairy tales some journalists of the Right have tried to prove that Burma was not lost because the Burmese were refused self-government; they admit that the Filipinos fought to the last man in order to defend the freedom which the United States was wise enough to bestow on them; on the other hand they point out that Malta, a Crown Colony, has done even better; with snobbish complacent self-flattery they conclude that all is well with the Empire and that treachery is an innate characteristic unrelated to problems of welfare and freedom. These gentlemen cannot understand that freedom is dearer to unfortunate men who have never reaped its full benefits than to scribblers who have exchanged it for big salaries. The Maltese struggle for independence is not a whim of to-day; it is part of the heritage of every Maltese man and woman. It is best to quote an English authority:

"Brave Maltese—You have made yourselves interesting and conspicuous to the world. History affords no more striking example. Betrayed to your invaders, deprived of the means of resistance, eternal slavery seemed to be your inevitable doom. The oppression, the sacrilege of your tyrants became intolerable. Regardless of consequences, you determined at every hazard to vindicate your wrongs. Without arms, without the resource of war, you broke asunder your chains. Your patriotism, your courage, your religion supplied all deficiencies. Your energy commanded victory and an enemy, formidable to the best disciplined armies of Europe, yielded in every point to your unexampled efforts and hid their disgrace behind the ramparts. The gallant battalions of the Casals have ever since confined them there, with a vigilance and patience worthy of the cause of freedom."

The quotation is part of an address by Brig.-General Graham to the Maltese; the date is 1800, not 1942; the particular enemy in question was Napoleon's garrison; the freedom referred to was very quickly replaced by British Imperialist protection, the same benevolent protection that the people of India, Africa and the West Indies have learnt to love so well that they cannot live without it. Once again Malta reverted to its miserable historic role—a pawn in the hands of Great Powers.

How is it, then, that the Maltese people are cheerfully sacrificing their lives and their homes for the Allied cause? The B.B.C. should have broadcast the answer a long time ago; instead we have been entertained by amusing stories about Malta, submitted by soldiers and sailors. Maltese leaders should be brought to the microphone to tell English listeners what the Maltese nation is fighting for.

The Maltese leaders of to-day are not the priests; Cardinal Hinsley may not know; Mr. Woodruff, of *The Tablet*, should have supplied him with accurate information; Mr. Woodruff was in Malta just before the war broke out; he must have noticed how the clergy was reeking of pro-Italian sympathies; for once the sheep have not followed the shepherds and the shepherds are left with no other alternative but to follow the sheep.

The Maltese leaders have pinned their hopes on a future international organisation that will safeguard the interests of small nations; from the British people they now demand the immediate reinstatement of self-government; the bestowal of the George Cross has flattered them, certainly not satisfied them. They have not asked for a Colonial Development Board and they do not need it; given adequate reparations from Italy and Germany they can rebuild their island in less than ten years' time. They are not very insistent with their demands because they realise that the fate of all progress-inspired men is at stake. Their slogan is "For Malta and for Humanity."

R. RAMENGO

A LONDON DIARY

One of the criticisms which I think the Government must take seriously arises out of the High Command's failure properly to use the best scientific advice. Professor Hill has repeatedly raised this question, and Dr. Haden Guest in last week's Censure Motion spoke of his astonishment when he learnt that the Prime Minister "assisted by his personal assistant Lord Cherwell" had spent on his own authority a very large sum of money on the development of a new weapon. The full story cannot, of course, be told, but a considerable number of people in this country have been worrying about this secret weapon for the past six months. The sum of money spent is actually, I believe, larger than that mentioned by Dr. Haden Guest, though he thought it might be as much as thirty million pounds. The damage was much worse than he suggested because an immense amount of labour and material have been mis-spent in the development of a weapon which should never have gone beyond the experimental stage. This mistake seem to have been made in spite of the Government's technical advisers. The remedy would seem to be to put the best technical advice into a position where it cannot be ignored.

* * *

Two broad streams of propaganda, one of them from Dr. Goebbels and the other from Lord Vansittart, play steadily on our ears to persuade us that every German is a Nazi. Together they intimidate us, until even those of us who know better begin to distrust our own information. This was the reflection that formed itself in my mind as I came away from a visit to the remarkable exhibition which the Free German League of Culture is showing at 149 Regent Street up to July 26. Here is ample evidence, some of it curious and amusing, of the activity of the Underground Movements, both Socialist and Communist. What does a stolid father of a family feel, when he picks up a beautifully illustrated pamphlet about an alluring holiday resort, only to find when he reaches the sixth page that he is reading an incisive attack on the whole Nazi regime? I wager he won't soon forget what he imbibes in this way. But what impressed me even more was the visual proof of the growth and boldness of the Opposition. The photographs of Catholic processions and public demonstrations were startling. In former days Catholics did not fill the streets in this way. And what am I to make of the picture of the silent defiance of the workers mobilised to complete the Siegfried Line in a hurry just before Munich? They had given so much trouble that the Führer was brought down to address them. Here he is in an official Nazi photograph taking their salute. At a first glance it looks as if every arm were raised. But on closer inspection, only three men out of the seven in the front row are really extending their arms. Four in seven are passively defying Hitler under his very eyes. Surprising, but I know of no explanation except the obvious one.

* * *

I can believe that the more sober and thoughtful of the German workers in middle age retain their own beliefs: but can anything be done with the young men who have been perverted by a Nazi education? I heard several refugee teachers discussing this question the other day. The evidence was clear that the Nazis do consciously strive to develop in normal boys tendencies that end in criminal or psychopathic states of mind. They begin with the normal hero-worship of youth and turn it into the blind deification and abject obedience which their creed demands. Again after demonstrating that Poles are an inferior race, they draw the inference that an inferior race needs less food, less clothes and less space than the master-race. The next step is logical and easy—to strip the Poles of their superfluous clothing. But the belief in German superiority rests on the evidence of events. When the career of victory ceases and is reversed in defeat, the whole legend will crumble. Actually, here and there, though as yet only in rare cases, this process has begun. The Nazi newspaper in Königsberg stated the other day that some of the youth in East Prussia are refusing to join the Hitler Jugend, while others are quitting it. That is, of course, an overt act of revolt. The startling event at this discussion was a speech by a Polish visitor in uniform. He argued from the behaviour of the German settlers forcibly installed in Polish farms that they have uneasy consciences. He went on to ask for suggestions as to how Poles should develop a sense of brotherhood with their German neighbours. I wish I could believe that many professing Christians will, like this Polish Catholic, ask that unusual question when the psychological moment arrives.

* * *

To say that the battle of Libya was lost on the polo grounds of the Cavalry School may be an over-simplification of the issue, but apart from the inferiority of our armour and design, it is true to say that we have been picking our tank commanders from the wrong school. Instead of building up a new corps of tank officers from the ranks of the mechanically minded, we have simply turned the cavalry into a tank corps, and even to-day tank officers above the rank of captain, that is the majors, colonels and brigadiers, are being taken from the list of cavalry officers or India Army officers who may be called unemployed, merely because they have the appropriate seniority for command. I feel some sympathy for the officer who loves his horse and his polo being forced to put on an oily looking beret and get inside a hideously smelling tank, but is it right to put these men against specially trained tank officers whom Rommel has picked from the garages instead of the polo ground? Our trouble has been that we have treated the tank as a disgusting, mechanical substitute for the beautiful horse. No doubt if we could have hunted foxes in whippet tanks we might have developed a superior tank officer with the tactical knowledge to command tank battles.

* * *

I had some talk this week with Mr. Herbert Hodge, well known as a broadcaster, the taxi man who wrote that admirable book *Draughty in Front*. He told me that he had waited years to get anything he wrote accepted; he made the usual mistake of not writing about taxis which were the one thing he really understood. Nowadays he drives a bus, but he is just off to the U.S.A. to see, as he hopes, other men in similar occupations. I asked him whether his firm were pleased at the distinction conferred on him—I assumed at least that he had been congratulated and given a send-off. He told me on the contrary, that the Thames Valley Traction Co., for which he works, had even tried to use the Essential Works Order to stop him taking the time off for broadcasting. He has had a long and difficult task to get free for his tour.

* * *

For a century, since Macaulay set her on this road, educated India devoted all her brains to literary studies. Science, till Jagadhis Chandra Bose broke the spell by pioneering in physics and botany, lay beyond her mental fences. But something new has happened. I have just received a copy of one of the most readable and persuasive books that ever came my way. It is designed for Indian schoolboys and girls. I began turning its pages to look at the many fascinating pictures and ended by reading it through from cover to cover. It describes the inexhaustible natural riches of India—water-power, man-power, sunlight, minerals and so on. It shows the shocking neglect that prevails to-day, and then demonstrates what might with a will and some science be done with these immense assets. The author of *Our India* is Minos Masani, whose able brother and brilliant sister I used to meet in London. The thing is done with such tact that the Oxford University Press is its publisher. Its silent criticism of British rule is conclusive.

I thought the signatories of the Union of Democratic Control's leaflet on India had done well in their selection of a point of possible future advance. This point, made by people like Vernon Bartlett, William Paton, Leonard Woolf, Sidney Elliott, Gordon MacDonald, Edward Thompson and Professor Brierley, was that the Government should agree that there should be the same understanding about the atrophy of the Viceroy's veto that there was in the Provincal Governors' veto during the period of the Congress governments. It was on this issue of the British Government's readiness to transfer power from the Viceroy that the negotiations finally stuck when Cripps was in India. Sooner or later the issue will again arise. So far, the Government has been willing to increase the number, but not the real power of the selected Indian members of the Viceroy's Council. The number of Indian members has now been raised to eleven out of the total Council of fifteen, and a Defence Portfolio has been created with Sir Feroz Khan Noon as Minister.

Critic

THE PASSIONATE PROFITEER TO HIS LOVE

(After Christopher Marlowe)

Come feed with me and be my love,
And pleasures of the table prove,
Where *Prunier* and *The Ivy* yield
Choice dainties of the stream and field.

At *Claridge* thou shalt duckling eat,
Sip vintages both dry and sweet,
And thou shalt squeeze between thy lips
Asparagus with buttered tips.

On caviare my love shall graze,
And plump on salmon mayonnaise,
And browse at *Scott's* beside thy swain
On lobster Newburg with champagne.

Between hors d'oeuvres and canapés
I'll feast thee on *poularde soufflé*
And every day within thy reach
Pile melon, nectarine and peach.

Come share at the *Savoy* with me
The menu of austerity;
If in these pastures thou wouldst rove
Then feed with me and be my love.

Sagittarius

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to G. L. Russell.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

May I try to comfort these people who are so jealous of the Old School Tie? There is no reason for them to feel so frustrated. They would have been no different from what they now are wherever they had gone to school. It is the man not the school which matters. You cannot turn a cart horse into a Derby winner by sending it to a training stable.—Letter from Lord Alvingham in the *Daily Sketch.*

No extra or special trains are being put on either at Crewe or anywhere else. To get all these travellers away we have merely augmented the existing time-table and run relief trains in duplicate. —*The Star.*

Permission to import reed canes from Spain for making bagpipes is to be applied for in the Commons this week by Mr. Arthur Woodburn, M.P. for East Stirlingshire. His reason: "It would be a tragedy not to have sufficient bagpipes to play our victorious troops into Berlin."—*Daily Mail.*

ODD WORLD

I confess I was annoyed the other day. I had bought a monthly season ticket to Victoria and Waterloo, and a railway inspector, making the rounds of the train on the way home from Victoria, told me with a shake of the head that the ticket was "not available via Sutton." He assured me that the ticket entitled me to go to Victoria only via Worcester Park and Clapham Junction. I argued that he must be wrong since no trains going from my station to Victoria pass through Worcester Park. I have no deep-seated prejudice against Worcester Park, nor have I any deep-seated love of Sutton, but as all the Victoria trains of which I know pass through Sutton, I have a slight preference for travelling via Sutton. Everybody in the neighbourhood so far as my experience goes, passes through Sutton when aiming at Victoria merely because that is the route by which the trains to Victoria go.

The inspector, however, maintained in the most charming and good-natured way that if I went to Victoria via Sutton I was liable to a charge of a number of pennies—I forget how many—extra. When I bought the ticket, I may say—it was from a small station in the neighbourhood of Dorking—I had expressed no desire to travel to Victoria via Worcester Park. I had asked simply for a ticket to Victoria and Waterloo, this being for some reason slightly cheaper than a ticket that also permits one to arrive at London Bridge, which is a little out of my beat. On the ticket there was, I admit, written: "Victoria and Waterloo via Worcester Park and Clapham Junction," but I took it for granted that this via stuff referred solely to Waterloo since the Waterloo trains pass through Worcester Park on the way to their destination. I find, however, that the inspector was right and that I was wrong. The Southern Railway, though it does not provide trains that go to Victoria via Worcester Park during business hours, stipulates apparently that, with a season ticket of this kind, you must avoid the paradise of Sutton if you want to reach Victoria, be content with a view of the beauties of Worcester Park, and change into another train at Clapham Junction.

This seems all the odder since, if the Southern Railway sells you an ordinary ticket to Victoria, it is perfectly broadminded as to the way along which you approach that admirable station. Even if you have only a cheap day-ticket you are given the freedom of the line. You can take your pick of Sutton, Worcester Park or Peckham Rye, and no ticket collector will question your right to emerge at any of the three chief Southern stations you fancy. If passing through Sutton is a luxury, however, you would think that it would not be thrown in, as it were, for the price of an excursion ticket. I do not suggest that the business man should be given greater privileges than the day tripper, but it seems to me that if the rule, "Let 'em go round by Worcester Park" is fair for the one, it is fair for the other.

At first, as I have said, I was rather annoyed when I was told that I had no right to go to Victoria by the only trains that go to Victoria. It is embarrassing for those of us who are self-conscious to have our names and addresses taken in the presence of strangers. We feel more or less like people who are stopped at the exit from a stores—is "a stores" correct, I wonder?—on suspicion of shop-lifting. All my life, not through honesty so much as through a desire to avoid scenes, I have set my face against travelling first-class on a third-class ticket. Yet now, when white hairs are accumulating and hairs of a darker colour are disappearing, I find myself publicly charged with going home by Sutton on a ticket that entitles me only to go home by Worcester Park. The news in the paper was pretty grim that day; but such is the human sense of proportion that for a moment I forgot all about contemporary history and could think only of a great railway having involved me in a "scene."

Gradually, however, I became mildly philosophic and tried to discover some explanation (on the assumption that the inspector was right) of the Southern Railway's passion for sending season-ticket holders to Victoria via Worcester Park. My first idea was that many years ago some official, sitting on a committee, had made the Worcester Park suggestion during a heat wave and that the other members, being somnolent, had carried it unanimously. Everybody who has served on committees knows that there is usually at least one member who is always proposing some change or other, even if there is no sense in it and if it is a change for the worse. Committee men of this kind feel that they are justifying their existence only if they make some proposal or other—it does not matter what. If the committee ordinarily met on Thursday, they would propose that the day should be changed to Wednesday. If it ordinarily met on Wednesday, they would propose that the day should be changed to Thursday. It is easy to imagine how a committee man in this mood one day came out with the novel suggestion that season-ticket holders going from Dorking to Victoria should be prevented from using Victoria trains. The man may have been a humorist, relishing the thought of a horde of tired business men making that broken journey day after day by way of Worcester Park.

I doubt, however, whether that is the real explanation. There is usually a reasonable reason even for unreason, and I suspect that the right to go to Victoria by Worcester Park and Clapham Junction was originally a concession made to holders of season-tickets to Waterloo. Probably at that time what is called "interavailability" was in its infancy. Competition was supposed to be the life of trade, and even railway lines going to the same terminus insisted that, if you bought a return ticket, you must travel back along the same line by which you had set out. In my first year in England I bought a return ticket between Manchester and Northwich and had to pay my fare over again on the way back because the second train happened to belong to another company. It seemed to me at the time to be lunacy, but competition has often resulted in lunacy. Even so I think that if you buy a season-ticket to a station to which through trains run during business hours you ought not to be asked to approach it by a route along which no through trains run. If it is a matter of importance to send people to Victoria via Worcester Park it seems to me to be at least common sense to provide a train that goes to Victoria via Worcester Park.

Oddly enough, when I tried to think of other comparable absurdities in English life I could recollect scarcely any. D.O.R.A., of course, introduced a number of absurdities during the last war. I remember getting out at Oxford station one night and having a bottle of beer in the refreshment room when someone came in and asked for chocolates. There were chocolates in the place—for the war was over—but it was against the law to sell them after eight o'clock. This prohibition was not based on the theory that chocolates were worse for you than beer, but on the view that it was unfair to allow refreshment rooms to sell chocolates at an hour at which it was illegal for confectioners' shops to be open. It was reasonable enough, if you thought that the interests of the consumer were trivial in comparison with those of the salesman. But it was lunacy, and was afterwards admitted to be such. I discovered a similar lunacy one night many years ago in London when, going into a confectioner's shop for a bottle of ginger ale, I was told I must take it outside and drink it in the street as mineral waters could not be sold at that hour without a licence, the theory being that the sale of mineral waters in confectioners' shops would cause unfair competition with public houses.

In England at the present moment one of the most agreeable absurdities I have noticed has been the increase of prices in some restaurants as an immediate result of the introduction of "austerity." At least, in one restaurant at which I sometimes lunch I find my meal costs me a few pence more—only a few pence—than before Lord Woolton called for economy. Until lately I lunched on a meat dish which cost 2s. 3d., with one vegetable costing 6d. or 9d. Thus I spent only 2s. 9d. or 3s. Since austerity came in, however, I am compelled to take two vegetables with the meat course and am charged 3s. 3d. for this. I also notice that so cheap a dish as sausages has disappeared from the menu. I do not complain, but it seems to me to be funny that the first result of an austerity and economy drive should be to increase the price of my lunch. Very English, you may think. England certainly continues to deserve her reputation as a land of unreason. John Bull and the Irish bull may be more closely akin than most people realise.

Y.Y.

AT HERTFORD HOUSE

Someone should elaborate a Gresham's Law for the benefit of exhibition-makers. If bad money drives out good, bad pictures disable works of art. A good picture in bad company—in enough bad company—is apt to lose that primary power of gripping the attention which is a necessary prelude to stirring the emotions. Though there is not a room in Hertford House which does not contain something worth looking at, only in Galleries III and V is art in sufficient force to dissipate entirely the blight cast by a plethora of sheer nonsense. However, it is held uncivil to scrutinise the mouth of a gift horse, and these nine hundred-odd works have been presented—to be exact half of what they fetch has been presented—by their authors to Mrs. Churchill's fund in aid of Russia. Rarely, in my recollection, has so vast and heterogeneous a collection been so well shown. Partly this may be explained by the fact that the mixed multitude displays itself in unusually pleasant and spacious surroundings; but a great deal of credit is due to the organisers and hanging committee. The visitor has much to be thankful for: especially will he be thankful to whomever it was who had the bright idea of massing in Rooms III and V the bulk of what can be fairly described as serious art.

Probably those who care for art but lack time or energy will confine their attention to these two rooms. Gallery III opens with an admirable picture by that uneven artist, Matthew Smith; hard by is an interesting experiment by Scott and a good little picture by Macbryde; Ivon Hitchens has sent a fine painting which holds handsomely the middle of the wall; Du Plessis is as attractive as ever; and surely even the great collectors and officials will at last discover the charming talent of Claude Rogers. There is certainly something to be said for the picture by Feibusch, though it may not be easy to say what—perhaps that, having been precisely and intelligently conceived, the conception is competently realised. This brings us to Duncan Grant's *Woman with a Veil* (presented by Mr. and Mrs. Myers), a picture beautiful in painting and even more beautiful in movement. And so we come to the opposite side where are to be seen representative works by less known but highly interesting people, Colquhoun, Tunnard, Tisdall, the versatile Peake and the enigmatic Hurry: best of all, perhaps, where is to be enjoyed the delicious elegance of Mrs. E. Q. Nicholson. Finally the room can boast two excellent terracottas by Dobson, A.R.A.

In Gallery V the company is mixed; but a room that contains work by Stanley Spencer, Leila Faithful, Quentin Bell, Jack Yeats and Mary Potter is not to be neglected. Also that tantalising artist, Devas, is here represented by a well-painted picture which a certain over-sweetness and indecision in the rendering just succeeds in reducing to the second class. And here, having done two galleries, the over-worked amateur is likely to cry "enough." One will understand his retreat, but he will probably regret it. I, at any rate, during my march through the six remaining rooms, down the stairs and round the hall, was checked from time to time by contributions of interest from Frances Hodgkins, Henry Moore, Uhlman, Lucien Pissarro, Patricia Preece, Sthyr, Neal, T. Nash, Peake, Mary Godwin, Alison Debenham, and by a remarkable study of a head, *Vera*, by Miss Faithful. There were other things no doubt that merited critical attention; but either they were crushed under mountains of rubbish or I was.

Clive Bell

THE MOVIES

"The Young Mr. Pitt," at the New Gallery

"The Gold Rush," at the London Pavilion (from Sunday)

Because I like history, I detest historical films. It is possible to combine truthful biography with entertainment. Mr. Lawrence Housman's plays about Queen Victoria are excellent, and so have been several recent B.B.C. features, notably those portraying Defoe and Shelley. But the film-studio invariably and gratuitously distorts. *The Young Mr. Pitt*, made in England on a script by Lord Castlerosse, is far less wild and offensive than what Hollywood has accustomed us to. It's not very bad (or very good) either as history or as entertainment. The author has wasted much time (and more imagination) upon Pitt's dim leaning towards Eleanor Eden—who played, I suspect, a smaller part in his life than *The Wealth of Nations*; and this sop to the conventional idea of entertainment is the least entertaining part of the film. Every schoolboy used to know that Pitt was an ungainly figure with an interminable turned-up nose and what George III called a "damned long obstinate upper lip." In future every schoolboy will know that he was a graceful and handsome young man with a flawlessly aquiline nose. This is not very important, and Mr. Robert Donat atones for the excellence of his profile by the excellence of his acting. More serious, the film world, presumably because of the money-bags behind it, is always resolutely anti-liberal: Dizzy is always a hero, Gladstone a skunk. So now Fox is the villain—and, what is more, an effeminate villain. The film ends happily with Trafalgar, before Austerlitz and the rolling up of the map. Nothing, of course, is said about bribery or the Act of Union. There are a few pointless howlers, such as daily Communion in a country church, but the House of Commons is well reconstituted, and the production is careful though unimaginative. Inevitably the film emphasises topical parallels, which are usually misleading. Pitt had neither Mr. Churchill's virtues nor his deficiencies. He was by nature a man of peace—indeed, he began as an appeaser; and he fought Napoleon chiefly by subsidising foreign armies. But the chief fault of the film is that it seems unconscionably long.

In *The Gold Rush* Chaplin used exquisitely the technique of the silent film. To add a spoken commentary is to paint the lily—in the Earl of Salisbury's words "wasteful and ridiculous excess." The explanation is that the big cinemas would not revive the film unless it were thus disfigured. Chaplin wrote and speaks the commentary himself: he pokes some obvious and unnecessary fun at the melodramatic situations, but never deviates into a remark that might add to our enjoyment. The film remains touching, comic and immensely enjoyable. In the seventeen years since it was made, world history has made Charlie more than ever a symbol. He kids himself that boots are good to eat, and we think of the millions whom the Germans are starving. He stands up to a big bully, and we see in him the Pole, the Czechoslovak, the Frenchman and the Jew. He incarnates the unbreakable spirit of the weak, the victorious pertinacity of the free. A film, in fact, that has the lasting potency of a legend.

K. L. Williams

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Lifeline," at the Duchess

It was not until ten or twelve years after the Armistice that *Journey's End* appeared, and even then it was prophesied that no audience would tolerate its realism. *Lifeline*, a more realistic play, is produced at a critical period in a more critical war. This may well be a measure of the great change in public honesty. The play is honest enough to fulfil its difficult function. There are no false heroics and only rare moments of sentimentality. The acting is almost flawless, and Mr. Michael Redgrave's production is thoughtful and astringent. *Lifeline* describes, without any attempt at a plot, the wartime voyage of a tramp steamer from Canada to England. Losing her convoy through engine trouble, the S.S. *Clydeside* is heavily bombed. The voyage lasts twenty-five days, and by the end of it the captain and three-quarters of the crew have been lost. This is the bare pattern of an event which is a reality every week on the Atlantic. There is never a moment of improbability. Of the actors Mr. Arthur Sinclair and Mr. Frank Pettingell are really funny. Mr. Wilfred Lawson is excellent as the captain and Mr. Terence de Marney is as convincing as his obscure past allows him. As the one man on board who understands the true relationship between owner and seamen, it is inevitable that a certain amount of deliberate obscurity should surround him. The angry message of peace-time injustice is half concealed by the suggestion that he is simply a sailor with a grievance. But the play's intention is slyly suggested in the last line. Dirty and exhausted after the voyage the crew receive a message of congratulation from the owner. The first officer, now captain, is too inarticulate to answer, and the Bosun's suggestion brings down the curtain: "Hoping this finds you as it leaves me."

Gerhard Frankl at Walker's Galleries, 118, New Bond Street

Civil Defence Artists at Cooling's

Mr. Frankl is an Austrian artist remarkable for his sensibility and accomplishment. The student as well as the connoisseur will find it repaying to study the series of drawings now on show. The subject of them all is English woodland, and the artist reminds one, now of Corot, now of Cézanne, in the delicacy of his texture and the firmness of his drawing. The adjacent trunks make as it were a suite of melodies, for which the leafage adds a rich orchestration. There's none of the over-emphasis usual in Central European art, and the personality of the draughtsman is shown only in a gentle poetry and an extreme skill of execution.

The new Civil Defence Artists' show disappoints: there are a few good works by those who regularly exhibit there, but the standard is less high than it has been.

Correspondence

THE R.A.F.

Sir,—Without attempting to enter into a discussion of your criticism of the R.A.F.'s part in the North African campaign, it might be possible to clear up a single issue of fact.

You write that a strong force of "long distance, giant bombers" should have been sent out to the Middle East months ago, and that the real reason why they were not is that the R.A.F. was intent on keeping them at home "for its monster raids on German towns."

Now, whatever wishes the R.A.F. may or may not have had on the matter, the number of bomber squadrons to be sent to the Middle East must have been mainly determined, like almost everything else, by the availability of shipping.

A very natural misapprehension exists in this connection. The fact that 4-engined bombers can be flown out to the Middle East makes people suppose that the availability of this weapon, at any rate, in North Africa, is not limited by the amount of tonnage which can be allotted to it. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the fact that the aircraft themselves can be flown out makes no difference to the amount of shipping which must be allotted in order to make it possible to operate additional squadrons from Egypt. So large is the quantity of stores, spare parts, maintenance personnel, workshops, etc., absolutely indispensable to the operation of these complicated and delicate pieces of machinery, all of which have to be sent by sea, that the high mobility of the aircraft themselves is of little advantage.

The petrol, lubricating oil, ammunition, stores of all kinds for servicing and maintenance, are extremely heavy users of tonnage. For instance, a four-engined bomber is equipped with four 16ft. propellers, each weighing 18 cwt., an undercarriage weighing over 1 ton, two 9ft. high tyres; each of the four engines weighs over 1 ton. The main plane is 50ft. long, not an easy replacement job in the desert. A liberal supply of spares of every one, not only of these major items of equipment, but of all the tens of thousands of other parts of these bombers must be shipped out to the Middle East before squadrons can operate there. Again, heavy bomber squadrons must have huge hangars and repair shops equipped with cranes, jacks and movable scaffolding platforms, similar to those which maintain over-head tram wires. Some of the bombs which they carry weigh tons, therefore cranes must be provided for the single job of lifting these bombs from their stores into the aircraft.

All this does not mean that the Middle East Command must not have, and have not got, a formidable bomber force. Nor does it mean that it is not being continually reinforced with bomber aircraft of various types. But it does mean, unfortunately, that every additional bomber squadron which is sent out there means that we can send so many fewer tanks, anti-tank guns, infantry weapons or what you will. The squadrons are not, in a word, a net addition over and above the equipment of all kinds which can be shipped out. Unfortunately they are merely one kind of equipment which has to compete for tonnage with all the other kinds. For the fact that the bombers themselves can fly helps very little. It has been compared to the arrival of the family by taxi at their new home after all the furniture has been moved in by Carter Paterson's vans, and the builders and decorators have finished their job. No more effective way of making it impossible for us to use our bombers at all, either at home or abroad, could be imagined than to send them out without this equipment.

Without entering into any discussion on the merits of our bomber offensive against Germany, I cannot avoid the impression that many people suppose that a major part of our available aircraft are devoted to this task. The general public would not be surprised, I think, if it were told that we used 60 to 70 per cent. of our operational aircraft of all kinds for the attack on Germany. But I believe that Mr. Peter Masefield, the Air Correspondent of the *Sunday Times*, was much nearer the mark when he gave the figure of 10 per cent.

Francis Gower

[Reference is made to this letter on our front page this week.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Sir,—I strongly endorse the passage in your July 4 article saying: "Drastic changes will have to be made. For the moment a useful step would be for Parliament to set up a permanent commission to inquire more deeply into the causes of the defeats." I would stress the word "permanent."

Under the Constitution the people delegate the conduct of the war to Parliament and Parliament to the Government which it appoints. Thereafter one of its functions is supervision, especially when things go wrong. Here Parliament has proved itself consistently ineffective, judged by the standard required if Hitler is to be defeated. This is due partly to the tactical advantage which the Government, in full possession of the facts (which it naturally presents in the way most favourable to itself) enjoys over Members whose information is necessarily fragmentary and often conflicting; and partly to a praiseworthy determination not to impair the essential unity of the national effort. This is true not only of a particular campaign, such as Libya, but of the war machine itself, and there lies the seat of the trouble.

Libya is the symptom, Whitehall the disease. The reason why disaster has overtaken us in the Middle East is not primarily due to either the generals, or the troops, or their equipment, but to defects in our central planning of the war. We failed to adopt practical measures to offset the advantage, as regards relative length of sea communications, which Rommel enjoys, in the ratio of at least 1 to 25. This gave the powerful German war machine the certainty of being able to wage a war of attrition successfully, provided its sea communications could be made reasonably secure. The palpable effort to neutralise Malta was the red light of this strategy. If the Navy and R.A.F. between them were then unable to sink the ships *en route* to Libya, the R.A.F. must make the ports unusable. A sufficient number of bombers must be sent to Egypt with their ground establishments. Cologne must wait. Unless Rommel could be hamstrung, offensive strategy was madness—and our strategy was potentially offensive, only he forestalled us.

After practically every disaster there has been a debate on the conduct of the war and demands for this or that change in the war machinery have been made. The procedure began in fact long before the war when there were cries for conscription and for a Ministry of Supply—both tardily conceded. From December 1937 to January 1942 (25 months) attention was concentrated on a Ministry of Production. Now the separation of the offices of Prime Minister and Ministry of Defence appears to be the cure most favoured. But whoever supposes that this specific, even assuming it to be intrinsically desirable, or any other, would alone suffice, is carrying optimism to extreme lengths; the debate revealed shortcomings in every direction. Clearly an overhaul of the whole planning system is needed as a first step. But the machine cannot correct itself and Parliament has demonstrated its inability to do so. Is there any individual who is competent?

Parliament must insist on setting up a small Commission to investigate and make recommendations. These should indicate improvements needed, to be carried out step by step so as to avoid dislocating the machine, though the ideal to be reached might be framed at an early stage. The planning system should embody practical experience, scientific investigation, applied technique and imaginative enterprise, and the period of gestation for plans should be reduced to the minimum. Such a Commission should—as you, sir, suggest—become a permanent part of the war machinery. It should be provided with a staff to assist it not only in its initial investigations, but also thereafter as inspectors. All recommendations would naturally require the approval of the War Cabinet, but this could not be lightly withheld.

Parliament would then be provided with the means to exercise sane and effective control over the war machine, lack of which is the root of our trouble.

The Army and Navy Club, Clive Garsia
S.W.1.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND BLACK MARKET

Sir,—One talks of Jews as if they were all one kind of people; as if there were no difference between the German Jew and the American Jew, or the English and the Polish Jew. In reality the Jews of each community are a faithful mirror of the country in which they live. That is not surprising, for through centuries of hazardous living and frequent flight, the Jews have perfected to the point of instinct the chameleon art of merging with their surroundings.

I have met Jews from many countries. In their own habitat I have known Canadian Jews, American, English, Irish, South African, Indian, Irakian, Egyptian, Syrian and Palestinian (there is a native Palestinian Jew). Outside their countries I have met Italian, Czechoslovakian, German, Yemenite, Rumanian, Polish, Swedish, Abyssinian, Australian, French and Russian Jews. Without exception they have all mirrored the general outlook and standards of the country in which they had been brought up. Sometimes to a farcical degree, as in the case of the Jews of Ulster, and those of Eire. Or of the English Jews, many of whom are more conservative and insular than the English. I have in mind one English Jew who, fortunate in having ancestors who fled to England instead of to Germany or to Poland when they were expelled from Portugal two centuries ago, is now one of the fiercest opponents of a Jewish Army formed of refugees, on the wonderfully Blimpish grounds that "You can't trust these foreigners!"

The Jews of Poland, on the whole, I have found penny-grubbing, cunning, and given to circumlocution, reflecting the life of the impoverished Jewish masses in the Polish ghettoes, restricted and exploited by a corrupt and graft-demanding officialdom. American Jews are just like any other Americans, complete with breezy manners and deep voice. I have yet to meet a Czechoslovakian Jew who is not clean, decent and independent, with sound democratic values.

The so-called "Jewish" practices which come so readily to the lips of anti-Semites are a reflection of what the government of a country will countenance, and the people accept. The Jewish money-lenders in Ireland are only a counterpart of the Irish money-lenders who are found in even the smallest villages throughout the country—an inevitable result of the extreme poverty and, in many cases, shiftlessness of the mass of the Irish people. If Jewish black-marketeers flourish in England, it is an indication of the inefficiency of the Government in checking this pursuit, and the determination of large numbers of people to keep their stomachs filled with peace-time delicacies even at the expense of other people, and the very welfare of the country. I have not yet come across a reference to Jewish black-marketeers in Russia.

In a letter headed "Anti-Semitism" printed in your number of June 20th, Mr. H. Blake states: "Mr. Slater and a few thousand of his friends settling in any colony would not last very long without State protection or arms." I think he has the right idea. But what Jews need is not State protection, but simply a State. One can hardly expect dignity and normality of behaviour and outlook in a people dispersed throughout the world in defenceless communities, never knowing what unpleasant surprises the morning paper will bring, and without any stable centre of gravity.

If society really wants to end the Jewish problem it can. Given sufficient right-thinking, high-principled people, the problem is simple. Unfortunately, I have noticed practically no indications that society does want to end the problem, in spite of the fact that it is all too evident to-day that the running sore of anti-Semitism pollutes and corrupts the society in which it thrives. Viewed from this angle, the daily papers give increasing food for thought; and the recent "Palestine" debate in the House of Lords makes peculiarly interesting reading.

Anita Engle

AID TO RUSSIA

Sir,—May I appeal to your readers on behalf of Holborn's "Aid to Russia" Week, which is being arranged for July 25th to August 1st?

Holborn is the borough in which The New Statesman and Nation has its home, and a substantial proportion of London's many thousands of business men and office workers spend their days within its borders. We hope to raise a really big sum for medical equipment by appealing to this great day-time population, and it is primarily for their benefit that we have planned our programme for meetings, lectures, exhibitions and concerts. These include a series of five lunch-time gramophone recitals at the Kingsway Hall (with lunch obtainable on the spot if it can be arranged), illustrating fifty years of Russian music.

I should very much appreciate offers of assistance, particularly in office collections and the sale of tickets, and I trust that all New Statesman and Nation readers who live or work in our area will help us, not only financially, but by telling their friends and colleagues about the Week. R. P. Bristow,
Hon. Secretary.

Holborn's "Aid to Russia" Week,
Holborn Town Hall, W.C.1.

THE BOOK AND PAPER SHORTAGE

Sir,—I am a mean mathematician but it appears to me an inescapable conclusion every time I open a daily paper that a considerable saving of paper could be made if certain formerly mass-producing firms (chiefly wireless and motor car), notorious for self-satisfaction over their somewhat mediocre products in pre-war days, could be induced by the Government to practice forbearance in the matter of pompous advertisements the burden, tenor and substance of which is that they have at the moment nothing to sell, and in effect some such train of reasoning as follows: If Messrs. X.Y. & Co. can with such eloquent prose boost NOTHING, then what natural limit can there be to their flights of eulogistic euphemism in times when they have at least something? If it be objected that the space saved would not be sufficient to warrant reducing the size of the paper, then I suggest that editors might consider the advisability of printing in serial form new books of interest and importance in the space thus freed which publishers with their rationed supplies of paper are unable to handle. George Richards

THE FOOL'S PROGRESS

Sir,—Mr. Rom Landau speaks of my "defence of German intellectual superiority," because I prefer Keyserling on the English to Mr. Landau on the English. The object of my review was to point out that the English are getting rather tired of being complimented on their stupidity, and to suggest that foreigners writing on England should acquaint themselves with the most varied and the most imaginative literature in the modern world.

38a Holland Park, W.11. Hugh Kingsmill

BREAD VERSUS VOTES

Sir,—An article in your current issue quotes Lord Hailey as saying "it would ill become us if the native asked us for bread and we gave him a vote." Does he ask us for bread, and if he does, why is he short of it? But why, readers ought first to ask, should this man deal with those questions? Why not let Africans speak for themselves? East Africans cannot. Their Governments spend 5s. a head a year on educating their children, as compared with over £20 on the children of Europeans resident in Africa. That explains why East Africans must leave their case to be put by someone who has had the education they are denied. What they want far more than bread is an end to this mental starvation, that prevents them from putting their own case to us and in Africa leaves them defenceless.

But let us leave aside the question of what Africans want and see what are the facts in this matter of bread versus votes that Lord Hailey and the Colonial Office evidently consider the vital question. In olden times there was plenty to eat except in years of drought. Why now, with better tools and methods, is there not enough? For two main reasons. First, because three East African Governments have made it a heavily punished crime for Africans to buy or lease land in addition to their ancestral holdings, even for the hundreds of thousands of them whom those same Governments have robbed of their holdings and left landless. Secondly, because Governments by indirect means compel the people to neglect their holdings, the source of their subsistence, in order to work for private employers for, according to the official Kenya estimate, an average period of two-fifths of the year, for wages averaging 5*d*. a day. Many of your readers have verified the accuracy of those two statements.

As for votes, until a few years ago it did seem cruelly irrelevant to propose to enfranchise people who had been so carefully kept in ignorance. But when even now in 1942 authority remains resolutely blind and deaf to the real causes, of sedition as well as lack of bread, there seems nothing for it but to let Africans have the only weapon that in other continents has given the common people power. They cannot misuse it worse that we have. The very fact that they resent the starvation of their minds more than the starvation of their bodies ought long ago perhaps to have shown us that they in their ignorance are likely to decide more wisely than we in our wisdom. Norman Leys

Yalding, Kent.

THE SOLUTION

Sir,—Surely the birth of another son at this juncture to the Duke of Kent solves a burning problem for us as a nation, and is yet another proof, if such is needed, that God does fight on the side of righteousness.

Here is the Commander-in-Chief the need for whom was so startlingly brought home to us by Sir John Wardlaw Milne in the House of Commons.

By the time this Prince has finished his course at Eton and the University, our production will be reaching its peak, and the vast resources of the great American nation will be fully mobilised. In such a hope, let us go forward, etc., etc.

Dorothy Hawkin

UNHAPPY ACCIDENT

Sir,—I notice with astonishment a small advertisement in The New Statesman and Nation offering accommodation, but excluding Jews. I hope this is an unhappy accident. It has distressed many readers of your journal. X.

[X. is only one of a number of correspondents who have rightly complained of this lapse. It was certainly an unhappy accident due to the absence on holiday of the member of the staff usually responsible for selecting "smalls" and rejecting those that are undesirable. We apologise.—Ed., "*N.S. & N.*"]

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE history of Europe can be considered as the history of myths. Over and over again political movements owe their power to the propagation of the undesirable but useful legend. I remember how bitter W. B. Yeats used to be when he talked about the inspiration and stimulus the Sinn Fein movement owed to the myths about Hungary which were spread by Arthur Griffiths. Mankind, he said, is led by half-truths or blatant lies. More kindly put: by the awakening of the imagination. In our own history, there is the nineteenth century's devotion to the myth of the innate superiority of the white man's blood and race. Only 40 years ago in England Kipling was admired by retired Empire builders for writing of the lesser breeds without the law. The part played by the Nordic myth in the story of German expansion is too well known to us. Erroneous and evil as these myths may be, it is undeniable that they lead to successful action; that is, in the sense that they have in the past unified large territories.

The idea of racism begins in Europe with the Spanish Empire and from the Spaniards down to Houston Chamberlain and Goebbels it has been an anomalous and evil doctrine.

> "In no country have the prejudices concerning a distinction between pure and impure blood become so firmly implanted as in Spain," wrote Leopold Ranke. "For most official positions it was necessary to produce evidence of purity of blood and it was felt as a great relief if the investigation did not go farther back than the fourth generation."

The devotion of the Castillians to the race doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* or purity of blood provided a cocoon of illusion for the birth of Castillian unity and for the discovery and conquest of the New World which followed. After centuries of subjection to the Moors it was good propaganda and a useful delusion to believe that an immaculate race of leaders and saviours had preserved itself in the Pyrenees, ready for the day of deliverance. But the use of myths has a similar effect to the use of alcohol: an inevitable hang-over follows the original elation. Many critics have seen in the figures of El Greco's pictures, and especially in the famous *Burial of the Conde de Orgaz*, a portrayal of the consequences of the Castillian addiction. A mongrel nation, if ever there was one, has at last been terribly transformed into the image of its own dream. In those sombre, furtive and emaciated figures of the living dead, as also in the scarecrow nobility of Don Quixote, are indicated the final phase in which purity has lost its knightliness and its aura of the *Herrenvolk* and has become self-mortification, sterility and paralysis.

European racism dates as Miss Ruth Benedict says in her concise and learned little book *Race and Racism* (Routledge, 7*s.* 6*d.*) from the centuries of discovery, when instead of the wonders of Cathay, the explorers found the twittering, naked natives of the Caribbean, the Red Indian of the north, the Mexicans with their blood sacrifices and the negroes helpless against gunpowder. During the Crusades against the Moors darkness of skin must have become a symbol of fear and evil to generations of Europeans, and it is not hard to see how a conditioned reaction came to seem like an instinctive revulsion in the course of time, when the dark became the conquered race or the slave. But as far as we can see, this earlier racial discrimination, interested though it was, was not dignified by a philosophical defence. It is not until the nineteenth century, Miss Benedict reminds us, when reactionary forces gathered together against libertarian ideas, that racism became first a pseudo-philosophy and then a pseudo-science. As the Spaniards perverted Roman Catholic ideas and certainly perverted the Christian tradition, so the French and then the Germans went open-eyed against the whole trend of scientific thought. In the last twenty years science has pronounced clearly about the impossibility of pure races and fixed heredities; and has distinguished unmistakeably between the things that belong to heredity and those which belong to culture patterns. It has reduced the Nordic myth to a farce. Only 12 per cent. of Swedes, the super-Nordic nation, were found to have Nordic characteristics. There is some interesting scientific information on heredity in Prof. Gunman Dahlberg's *Race, Reason and Rubbish* (Allen and Unwin, 8*s.* 6*d.*) lately published, translated by Prof. Lancelot Hogben, a book which contains as good a popular exposition of Mendelian and post-Mendelian discovery as I have read. One would have thought that the preponderance of Alpine types in Germany would have been enough to point the comedy of Nazi beliefs; and the sudden rise of Japan gives racism its final knock on the head. What has happened to the human races in the course of history can be seen, as Miss Benedict says, in miniature in the American melting pot of the last forty years.

But its untruth did not prevent the Nordic myth taking hold in America and becoming strong enough, in its own fashion, to give impetus to the immigration laws. We should be foolish if we supposed that objective truth has any force of itself. The Nazis have specifically attacked it. What you *feel* to be true—the old Romantic fallacy transferred to power politics—is true; and undoubtedly the belated German attachment to the myth at a time when it attracted only eccentrics, and, in America, threatened interests, is due to the backwardness of social development in Germany. The German preoccupation with degeneracy has culminated, by a tragic irony, not in the rise of the German people, but in a terrible decline along its dark and wretched paths. It will be an equally tragic irony if the racism of Germany produces an anti-German racism in Europe among Germany's enemies; for it is as unscientific (as Miss Benedict points out) to say that the Germans were always barbarians overthrowing civilisation, as it is comical for the Germans to say that the decline of Rome was due to intermarriage with the German vandals.

The first part of Miss Benedict's book sets out simply and clearly the science of the subject; the second and most suggestive is historical. In the beginning the doctrine was applied to class conflicts, by two French fantastics: first the Count de Boullainvilliers and later by Gobineau. Boullainvilliers tried to foment an aristocratic revival against the State Absolutism of Louis XIV; and he relied upon belief in the transmitted and unaltered blood and leadership of the Teutonic tribes who had given Europe its feudal overlords. The answer to this as the Abbé Sieyès pointed out, was the rise of the people. Gobineau also proclaimed an unbridgeable gulf between the aristocracy and the people, but he imagined romantically a fixed individual and not a fixed national type. A prosperous bourgeois, he desired to regard himself as the member of a princely line, and concocted for himself a terrific family tree which was published in 1879 under the title *The History of Ottar Jarl, Norwegian Pirate, Conqueror of Bray in Normandy, and of His Descendants*.

So far racism had not fallen into the hands of the Chauvinists. But when it did so, under Houston Chamberlain, it developed with a Wagnerian abandon. Any greatness achieved by any country was due to its German blood. Louis XIV, Dante, Michelangelo, Marco Polo, and even Jesus Christ, were Teutons: "Whoever reveals himself German by his acts, whatever his genealogical tree, is a German." Contrariwise, you could become the evil thing, a Jew, merely by having frequent intercourse with Jews or reading Jewish newspapers. Racism, in its extremity, threw over its own pseudo-science, everything including race itself. The pursuit of degeneracy has itself degenerated and political expediency has become an end in itself.

Neither the Roman Empire nor Christianity accepted any notions of innate inferiority or superiority in peoples, and modern science also refuses to support the differentiation. But science, like religion, has produced its myths. The greater chauvinism of race has replaced the small national chauvinisms. Is there something more to racism than its reactionary politics, its superstitions, its persecutions, its wicked assault on ascertained truth in a primitive search for power? Is it one of the inevitable legends of human history, I mean—since it is foolish not to allow for the perpetual recrudescence of evil in the world—is it one of the evil legends behind which the modern world is organising itself into larger units? One of the dangers which the enlightened are always in—Miss Benedict points out—is the danger of believing that it is enough to know something is untrue for it to be defeated. Obviously, there is a very great need of education on the subject of race, inside and outside of the racist countries and books like hers and Professor Dahlberg's cannot be too wisely circulated or too attentively read. We take especial pride in what for centuries we have called "instinct" and intuitive views: they please the emotions and are come by with no thought and with little trouble. But now that racism has become destructive, something active and dynamic must be placed against it. Perhaps, as the candid Abbé Sieyès said, the answer to the myth of the sacred aristocrat was the myth of the sacred people: perhaps that myth will be as dangerous as any other.

> One of the great advantages of racist slogans [Miss Benedict says—but is it an advantage?] is that the under privileged may use them. Therefore the unemployed and the low income groups can vent, through this alleged racist superiority, the hatred that is engendered by their fear and insecurity. Studies in America have many times shown that anti-semitism is strongest among low income groups . . .

The answer is that economic and cultural discriminations must go. There must be equality in the matter of civil liberties:

> The very progress of civilisation has laid the foundation for a vast extension of in-group mutual dependency and mutual support. The fatal flaw in most arguments which would leave to the schools the elimination of race conflict is that they propose education *instead* of social engineering . . . The programme that will avail against racism is called to-day "making democracy work."

The stimulus which the science of such books as Professor Dahlberg's and Miss Benedict's gives to the imagination, is an important contribution.

V. S. PRITCHETT

FRANCE SPEAKING

Le Creve-Coeur. Par ARAGON. *Nouvelle Revue Française.* 25 *fr.*

A book of 72 pages, its title the French word for "what breaks the heart"—this is the present sent me by one French friend and brought here by another. It was like receiving a present from the moon or the banks of the Acheron. I have read and re-read each line of these poems, and searched between the lines, for Louis Aragon is not only a writer of extraordinary brilliance, he is an intellectual of the Left. What he expresses many must feel. The verse is regular and rhymed—an absence of punctuation the only eccentricity. The first eleven poems were written at the Front, the others after the armistice—and these have excited a very large audience by giving to their deepest feelings a direct and lyrical voice.

Aragon, I am told, being notorious as a Communist, was placed in a post of particular danger, in which, as one would have expected, he showed great courage. (He gained several decorations.) But, as again one would expect, in the poems he then wrote, there is no patriotic feeling—the war was still Imperialist and phony:

> Jours carolingiens Nous sommes des rois lâches
> Nos rêves se sont mis au pas mou de nos vaches
> A peine savons-nous qu'on meurt au bout des champs
> Et ce que l'aube fait l'ignore le couchant

He watches pityingly boys young enough to be his sons called to the colours, while his own heart is filled chiefly with regret for what he has left behind:

> Rendez-moi rendez-moi mon ciel et ma musique
> Ma femme sans qui rien n'a chanson ni couleur
> Sans qui Mai n'est pour moi que le désert physique
> Le soleil qu'une insulte et l'ombre une douleur

Hope and belief appear only in a poem in which he remembers the Spanish War. But after the Armistice his feelings change and ripen. (Rather than waste space on my comments, let me give as many quotations as I can, since the book is unprocurable.) He begins by painting the beauty of that calamitous summer:

O mois des floraisons mois des métamorphoses
Mai qui fut sans nuage et Juin poignardé
Je n'oublierai jamais les lilas ni les roses
Ni ceux que le printemps dans ses plis a gardés

* * *

Tout se tait L'ennemi dans l'ombre se repose
On nous a dit ce soir que Paris s'est rendu
Je n'oublierai jamais les lilas ni les roses
Ni les deux amours que nous avons perdus
Bouquets du premier jour lilas lilas des Flandres
Douceurs de l'ombre dont la mort farde les joues
Et vous bouquets de la retraite roses tendres
Couleur de l'incendie au loin roses d'Anjou

He describes the grim mining villages of the Pas de Calais emptied of their inhabitants, and then the tousled horror of the great exodus. Here is a part of *Tapisserie de la grande peur*:

Le clocher qui plus jamais ne sonnera l'heure
Les chariots bariolés de literies
Un ours Un châle Un mort comme un soulier perdu
Les deux mains prises dans son ventre Une pendule
Les troupeaux échappés les charognes les cris
Des bronzes d'art à terre Où dormez-vous ce soir
Et des enfants juchés sur des marcheurs étranges
Des gens qui vont on ne sait où tout l'or des granges
Aux cheveux Les fossés où l'effroi vient s'asseoir
L'agonisant que l'on transporte et qui réclame
Une tisane et qui se plaint parce qu'il sue
Sa robe de bal sur le bras une bossue
Le cage du serin qui traversa les flammes
Une machine à coudre Un viellard C'est trop lourd
Encore un pas Je vais mourir va-t'en Marie
La beauté des soirs tombe et son aile marie
A ce Breughel d'Enfer un Breughel de Velours

Then comes the heartbreak after the capitulation:

Fuyez les bois et les fontaines
Taisez-vous oiseaux querelleurs
Vos chants sont mis en quarantaine
C'est le règne de l'oiseleur
Je reste roi de mes douleurs

Some resign themselves to the illusion of passive atonement, to reactionary dreams; and, beneath these, to despair:

A leurs poignets ils ne liront plus jamais l'heure
Reniant le monde moderne et les machines
Eux qui croyaient avoir la muraille de Chine
Entre la grande peste et leurs bateaux de fleurs

* * *

Dans le trouble sacré qu'enfantent leurs remords
Tout ce qu'ils ont appris leur paraît misérable
Ils doutent du soleil quand le sort les accable
Ils doutent de l'amour pour avoir vu la mort

But the poet suddenly recognises the reason of his misery:

Mon amour j'étais dans tes bras
Au dehors quelqu'un murmura
Une vieille chanson de France
Mon mal enfin s'est reconnu
Et son refrain comme un pied nu
Troubla l'eau verte du silence

And finally, in a magnificent poem about the Crusaders, Aragon liberates the cry that fulfils our hopes:

Reine des cours d'amour o princesse incertaine
C'est à toi que rêvaient les mourants au désert
Beaux fils désespérés qui pour toi se croisèrent
Eléonore Eléonore d'Aquitaine

* * *

Mais ce ne fut enfin que dans quelque Syrie
Qu'ils comprirent vraiment les vocables sonores
Et blessés à mourir surent qu'Eléonore
C'était ton nom Liberté Liberté chérie

This poem was written in September, 1940: the author had awoken to the nature of the war eight months earlier than his English fellow-travellers.

These splendid and passionate poems, in which an author previously esoteric revives the central tradition of French verse, make me regret more than ever the decision taken by Mr. Auden. For he is the only English poet who has shown potentialities such as Aragon has realised. But the requisite experience has passed him by. Had he seen London in winter turning crimson beneath the hornet hum, and the people in the ashy mornings upon the steps of their abolished homes, might he not have been fired, like Aragon, to make the poems for which a large public is waiting?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

NEW NOVELS

Reflections in a Golden Eye. By CARSON McCULLERS. *Cresset Press.* 6s.
The Fetch. By JOSEPH SHEARING. *Hutchinson.* 9s.
A Malayan Tragedy. By JOHAN FABRICIUS. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.
Scene in Passing. By ROBERT NEUMANN. *Dent.* 7s. 6d.

The Major's wife cuts off her nipples with a pair of garden shears; the Captain drops a kitten into a freezing letter box; the Private rides naked on a mare; the Captain falls in love with the Private; the Private sits all night on the bed of the Captain's wife; the Major's wife goes mad and dies; the Captain shoots the Private . . .

Not in this lieutenant's experience—but it is a fair measure of Miss McCullers' talent that one can even swallow the garden shears. In fact this astonishing book is a success, though a success which is rather uncomfortably a *tour de force*. This is a mad world, as the book's admirable title suggests, and the golden eye never takes a rosy view. It is mad in that at least four of the six characters are either half-witted or partially demented—there is no kind of madness in the extremely able technique.

"Atmosphere" has always been a trough for the hog-writers to wallow in, or a smoke screen to hide a complete absence of true thought and feeling. Miss McCullers pitches us straight into the most heady atmosphere imaginable; but though at times we may be almost overwhelmed by it, this is no trick to dull criticism. If Miss McCullers is guilty of a trick it is the brilliant one of persuading us to take the ludicrous quite seriously. The characters, from the blundering Major to the deft Filipino servant, are described with beautiful and economic accuracy. Within the strange orbit of the golden eye there are no internal contradictions. Once the premises are accepted the whole macabre and atrocious story follows with perfect logic and intelligence.

It is difficult to select passages for praise, for the book is thoroughly a unit. The part stands or falls by the whole. But in the sad incident of the garden shears I was impressed by the sugar with which the pill was coated. The tough writer would have described Mrs. Langdon's neurotic outburst as though it were a normal ingredient of his tough world. And this would revolt without convincing. But Miss McCullers knows much better than this.

" . . . a strange and tragic thing had happened among these four people a few months ago." This is how we are prepared for the pill, and the preparation is effective. It is the rare occasion when the writer is bound to pass his own comment on an event.

Understatement would have been fatal, and if no warning had been given of the incident before describing it, the reader would certainly have rejected it. This is by no means the best episode in the book—it may even be the worst—but it is an excellent illustration of the writer's persuasive talent. Anaclito, the Filipino servant, deserves a very special mention for charm, and Private Williams deserves Lady Chatterley's Challenge Cup. He is a genuinely alarming character, with his naïve brutality and utter lack of introspection. Indeed, reading the descriptions of this strange sub-man one is struck again by the fact that it is precisely the abused quality of introspection which separates men from the beasts. Captain Penderton is another satisfying

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JONATHAN CAPE

figure, and his half-conscious homosexuality is remarkably convincing . . . And yet now a week after finishing these odd reflections the most vivid impression is a comic one. It is easy to understand why. By sheer technical ability Miss McCullers carries off her *tour de force* and compels her reader to accept it. But once the book is finished the reader is released from her expert supervision. With a sense of real emancipation he will probably say : " What nonsense that was ! " But it was nonsense of the highest order.

The macabre is also Mr. Shearing's goal, and he is more successful than Miss McCullers in at least one respect ; he never errs on the comic side. It is sometimes a little difficult to understand why he has eschewed humour so austerely. The story is even more nonsensical than Miss McCullers'. A young earl is obsessed by neurotic reflections on the murder of a village girl by his eighteenth-century ancestor. A village girl of his own day (1870) provides a fitting parallel, but for some reason he is diverted from the obvious path and murders her sister. Such a story deserves full-blooded romantic treatment, with no soft-pedalling : yet Mr. Shearing writes with dignity and restraint. Never were these admirable qualities more out of place. The penalty of failure in this genre is far more severe than in most, for nothing in the world is more boring than an unsuccessful attempt to alarm. But Mr. Shearing achieves an impressive success in quite another field. His style is a masterly reconstruction of the most recent archaic. How pleasantly those periods roll along—and how much has been sacrificed to the modern passion for conciseness ! Often the use of five words where one would do is a welcome relaxation for an over-taxed reader.

A Malayan Tragedy belongs to a now familiar category of novels, those which largely atone for poor psychology by interesting anthropology. Before reading it I knew nothing whatever about half-castes in the Dutch East Indies, and I now know as much as I am ever likely to. Deeply interesting was the vivid description of the relations between four exclusive population groups—Malayan, Dutch, half-caste and Chinese. The novel is probably the only available vehicle for conveying this kind of non-technical social information. A pamphlet could have told as much, but would never, presumably, reach the wide public which Mr. Fabricius commands. At the same time there is something violently unsatisfactory about this method of imparting knowledge. Why should the information be diluted into a conventional plot and saturated in conventional psychology ? For, judged strictly as a novel, *A Malayan Tragedy* is of little value. Mr. Fabricius makes desperate assaults on our emotions, but like other recent assaults, his equipment is inadequate. He seldom reaches even the perimeter.

There is no tragedy in this book, but only an arbitrary series of disasters. Characters which are not thoroughly alive can never aspire to tragedy, and their misfortunes excite exasperation rather than compassion. But the amorous predatory expeditions of these young half-castes are well and sympathetically described. The repulsive colonial atmosphere is extremely vivid. Mr. Fabricius has an acute social eye, though he lacks any real understanding of the individual.

If Miss McCullers' book is a *tour de force*, Mr. Robert Neumann's achievement is heroic. Linguistically it is on a par with Conrad's, for until a few years ago, we are told, he had no knowledge whatever of the English language. There is, I think, no internal evidence to suggest that *Scene in Passing* was not written by an Englishman. So great is my admiration for Mr. Neumann's linguistic ability that I am reluctant to pass a hostile judgment. But it must be admitted that this novel suffers from grave, sometimes it seems from mortal, weakness. It is too often unbearably sentimental. The theme—the new village life of a bombed-out urban family—is open to abuse in this direction, and Mr. Neumann too frequently gives way to the temptation. It is astonishing that he has also acquired a style which is unhappily precious.

To speak, for example, of " the man Tibbs," " the boy Pugh," " the girl Archibald " (*sic !*) is an affectation which surely has no origin in the German language. But judgment is hard to pass, and possibly Mr. Neumann has achieved his remarkable fluency at the cost of not saying quite what he meant. One is left with grave doubts as to the wisdom of this drastic step. It is intelligible enough that German authors in this country should wish to communicate with the English public, to " throw bridges over the abyss of loneliness." But the German language does not stand or fall by Goebbels's abuse of it, and when the war is over there will be a crying need for free-minded German authors, writing in their own language.

Mr. Neumann believes that it is a " matter of dignity " to drop his own language. but dignity may one day compel him to return to it.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

ARABIC SCHOOLING

Middle East Window. By HUMPHREY BOWMAN. *Longmans.* 14s.

At first this threatens to be one of those anodyne autobiographies written by retired public servants to be read by leisured ladies. " There in the charming Riviera villa of the Khanot of Misrulee, I met Joseph (' Josh ') Sedley, who did so well out of Boggley Wallah, and exchanged a few words with Raffle Buffle (later Sir Raffle Buffle, K.C.G.) of the Secretaries' Office." Sir Humphrey Bowman's recollections include some chit-chat of this sort. For, as an education officer in Egypt and the Sudan, Iraq and Palestine, he met many contemporary worthies. However, he goes further than mere trivia, and within the limits of a somewhat rosy palette, he paints some lively portraits. Dr. Dunlop of Egypt, Sir James Currie of the Sudan, Sir Arnold Wilson, and Gertrude Bell, are the most interesting.

But the point of the book is education, and the moment Sir Humphrey touches shop his writing tautens and wakes up. He saw the early stages of schooling in the Sudan, he directed its beginning in Iraq and Palestine. His enthusiasm is for elementary and country schools. Sympathy for peoples just beginning to read and write, and liking it, is surely the best qualification which he could have brought to his task. His nicest tale is of the first girls' school in the Sudan, founded by Shaikh Babekr, in 1910 :

> After his inspection of the boys' *kuttab* (elementary school) Babekr asked my predecessor if he would like to see the girls' school. " Girls' school ? " exclaimed Crowfoot, " I had no idea you had begun to educate girls," " Well, it is only a small beginning, but come and see." He led him through the *zariba* dividing the two courtyards, and Crowfoot looked and saw. There were twelve little girls of varying ages sitting on the mud floor. They were all dressed alike, and all seemed equally intelligent. " That's a bright girl, O Shaikh ; whose daughter is she ? " pointing to the eldest. " O, that one—she happens to be my daughter." " Ah ! I see ; takes after her father ? And that one ? " pointing to the next in the row. " O, she's my daughter, too." " Really—that's interesting ; and this one ? " " O, well, it seems strange, I know, but that girl is also mine." And so it went on—all the twelve pupils were the Shaikh's daughters. Moslem prejudice against female education was soon overcome in a place where the teacher himself sent all his daughters to school, and by the following year it was crowded.

As Director of Education in Palestine, Sir Humphrey had to fill the gaps left by missionary

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HARRAP

schools of very varying standards, the universal Zionist system, and the negligible legacy of Turkish education. The result is a system as asymmetrical as that of England. The British officials had little to do with Jewish education, for the government grant was supplemented from Zionist funds with far more money than is available for the Arab schools, and the Jews naturally cherished their scholastic independence. Sir Humphrey laments the racialism which made them refuse to share with the Arabs in the agricultural training college founded by the bequest of the Jew Sir Ellis Kadoorie. He reserves praise for the kindergartens and " entrancing " children's colonies. The Moslem schools fell to the British to organise. There were few trained men teachers and no women, as an initial difficulty, one offset by the desire of the people for education. How different from England is a land where educated women are in such matrimonial demand that teachers have to be given a bonus for three years' service before they marry! Sir Humphrey is proud of the Arab college, a good secondary school for boys. But his heart is in the rural school, where the teachers taught the three R's and also weaving and agriculture, and ran health centres and agricultural co-operatives. The villages paid half the cost for their school buildings: one, Dura, raised £2,000, an enormous sum to be subscribed by Arab country folk.

The author gives the political background to his work; the " passionate devotion of both Arabs and Jews to the soil of Palestine," and the British trusteeship for both races. He is more interesting, because more candid, than most British writers on the subject, and tells one story which, as far as I am aware, has not been previously printed. It is of the early days of the mandate, with Dr. Weizmann expounding Zionism to British officials at Government House:

> Palestine was to be handed over to the Jews . . . One of us asked him what he intended to do with the Arabs. " Those who wish to remain here, of course, can do so," was Dr. Weizmann's reply: " But for those who do not so wish, there is Egypt, there is Syria, and " (pointing with a significant gesture to beyond the horizon of the Moab hills visible from the window), " there is the great desert from which they originally came."

Sir Humphrey's own solution for Palestine is an autonomous Jewish community in a reunited Arab Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan; but no solution yet proposed satisfies both nations in the Holy Land as just.

FREDA WHITE

THE CANDID FRIEND

And Hell Followed. By ODETTE KEUN. *Constable.* 8s. 6d.

Madame Keun is a citizen of cosmopolis both by heredity and experience. Her passport is Dutch, and Holland has contributed 50 per cent. of her blood, the remainder coming from Greece and France. There seem to be few European countries in which she has not lived. She has perforce spent the years of the war in England and her book is primarily addressed to us, her hosts. She is not one who suffers fools (and a good many other things) gladly, and among the objects of her illimitable and unflagging exasperation the British—or as she prefers to call them, the English—appear to take first place. Stupidity, muddle-headedness, unimaginativeness, lack of passion are qualities which rouse in her a fury which in other people would produce speechlessness, but in her a supercharged volubility, and these are qualities which she finds to be peculiarly English. But she remains our friend, mainly, we think, because she saw the stubborn resistance of these thickheaded people to the Nazis, to death and disaster, to fate itself in the terrible days between June, 1940, and June, 1941. Her book is, therefore, the book of the Candid Friend, in Canning's sense. A salutary book, no doubt, for the Englishman, though he may be pardoned, if after being mentally and morally flayed alive for 296 pages, his silent reaction to the candid friend is also Canning's.

Yes, the book is salutary, like a purgative. Essentially it is an analysis of the events, policies, and national psychologies which delivered the fate of Europe into the hands of the Nazis and produced the war, and the analysis is followed by an account of the three years of war. The book has some notably good qualities. Madame Keun has many qualities which are the opposite of those which she abhors as English. Her mind is as sharp as a pen; she thinks for herself, and, whatever one may think of the quality of her thought, it is never woolly or muddled; unlike the Englishman Lear, she cries continually at the top of her voice; " *Hysterica passio*, up, up! " But it would be a complete error to assume that her work is mere sound and fury. Behind the verbal torrent and *hysterica passio* is a very considerable knowledge of politics and history. She has read widely and deeply even in Blue Books, White Papers, and the stony desert of military strategy. Her narrative of events and their interpretation are, for the most part, excellent.

Madame Keun sees her own rôle as that of Cassandra; for years before 1939, she says, she foretold the catastrophe and no one heeded her. The chief blame for the catastrophe she places upon the British and upon " the dishonest, vain, obstinate, and uncreative Neville Chamberlain, the Gravedigger of Europe." Few Englishmen can read an analysis of the public policy of Britain under Chamberlain without a feeling of shame and anger, and there is no defence against three-quarters of Madame Keun's charges. But there is about one-quarter of the British temperament, of events, and of life itself—and a very important quarter—to which she seems to be constitutionally blind. (That is why she makes the elementary mistake of thinking that the British are completely unimaginative.) This often makes her judgments superficially right, but fundamentally wrong. And these defects are intensified by her own temperament and style in argument and exposition. She writes incessantly at the top of her voice, and when she has exhausted every other method of emphasis, she spatters her page with Capital Letters. She mistakes volubility and violence for passion. Sound and fury are all very well, but after a time, to the jaded and battered ear, they signify nothing.

LEONARD WOOLF

NAZI BLACK MARKET

The Spoil of Europe. By THOMAS REVEILLE. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

A People's History of Germany. By A. RAMOR OLIVEIRA. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

Underground Europe Calling. By OSCAR PAUL. *Gollancz.* 4s. 6d.

Prague Braves the Hangman. By E. V. ERDELY. " *The Czecho-Slovak.*" 4s.

The author, " Thomas Reveille," whom Raymond Gram Swing vouches for, seems from the evidence of his metaphors and exact understanding of the German language, to be a German; and he is specially qualified to analyse the organisational thoroughness on the reverse side of the Nazi frenzy.

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vastly in excess of the actual costs. The surplus funds made available are used to purchase a stranglehold on French industry. The kind Hitler ("Never has history known so generous a conqueror as myself") only allows his *Volksgenossen* to acquire 49 per cent. of stock in French concerns; the Gestapo attends the shareholders' meetings to make sure that the protected majority collaborate. Under the Treaty of Versailles the French collected less than 4 million marks in seven years. This equals the Nazi costs of occupation for six months. To the Nazis conquest means plunder, and what their armies can't carry in their knapsacks the economic experts and commissions arrange to be forwarded by train. Economic warfare in the German manner has been barely understood in Britain. Reveille shows the intimate connection between economic and military warfare—how the Economic Mobile Units of the Wehrmacht have the job of stripping conquered territory of anything that might serve the army; how the War Economy Board has ensured France's subjection by exporting its foodstuffs to the Reich; how the banks, now controlled by the Reichsbank, are able to starve industry of credit unless it works for the conquerors; how, in short, Hitler, a Shylock of our times, has drawn up a contract with the defeated in which he has made provision for their heart's blood as well as their pound of flesh.

The Spoil of Europe is a documented unfolding of the Nazi economic revolution, for corporate Fascism, although it has characteristics of monopoly capitalism, is a revolution, of autocratic centralism against *laissez-faire*. The largest stakeholders in this 1,000 year Order are the controllers of the State apparatus—party bosses and industrial controllers towards whom, although, as here, war profits have been restricted, the country's assets and the privilege of their use have flowed.

The Nazi black racketeers of big business and high politics will benefit their protégés, the *Herrenvolk*, as long as there is plunder; they'll share, provided they have too much themselves. Oscar Paul, himself a clear-sighted leader of the Austrian working class, emphasises in *Underground Europe Calling* that the German workers must have their own revolutionary reckoning with their masters. It won't begin till the plunder gives out.

The new Europe can expect nothing from the flabby pre-war social democracy which gladly handed the wheel of Germany's destiny to Hitler. Nor is there anything to hope from the pre-war trade union officials, the place-seeking *Bonzen*, who swooned at the sight of Revolution's ankle. This is Oliveira's thesis in his absorbing history of the rise and fall of German Socialism.

It fell because there were few Germans with the independence of spirit and tradition which marks the Czechs. *Prague Braves the Hangman*, a noble, dignified book, was written before Heydrich's death, but it is its explanation. Men may consent to be defrauded, suffer wrongs and accept injustice. But it is of man's nature to be free and his moral height may be judged by his unwillingness to cringe before a master. The Czechs in their misfortune have much to regret; they have nothing to repent.

MAURICE EDELMAN

Week-end Competitions

No. 649

Set by W. T.

The usual prizes are offered for the best sonnets on rain—each line to have one foot instead of five.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, July 20th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 646

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best pair of clerihews on the names of flowers or trees. Competitors may send as many as they like.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

It is easier to write clerihews than to judge them, and I've been overwhelmed by a whole Chelsea Show. I recommend that the prize money be divided between Hardy Amies, John Hayward, Allan M. Laing, William Bliss, Maud Budden, G. de Vavasour, Mrs. F. M. Cornford, Leslie Johnson, Ronald Mason, and G. B. Lawrence. I give a selection of other entries.

I'm only a
Bocconia;
But I'm quite the chicest buy
Chez Mrs. Spry.
The Night Scented Stock
Wears a poor little frock.
It was never meant
To be more than a scent.

Nasturtiums
Make remarkable excursions.
It's not unusual for you
To find one peeping in the lou.
(HARDY AMIES)

Lady's Slippers
Were a fetish of Jack the Ripper's.
He also indulged in cross-breeding,
And produced some interesting varieties of Love
Lies Bleeding.
Phlox
Won't grow on rocks.
Dill
Will.

The Odontoglossum
Has an ostentatious blossom.
It can hardly have been
(As Gray put it) born to blush unseen.

Mandragora
Is now only obtainable in the Black Ἀγορά
It lends itself to this kind of abuse
On account of its esoteric use.
(JOHN HAYWARD)

It is axiomatic, of course,
That Mrs. Henry Morse
By any other name
Would smell the same.

The pimpernel
Would be all very well
If exploited a little less
By the Baroness.

I intended to write a triolet
Upon the violet;
But I guessed it would weary you,
So I've written a clerihew.
(RONALD MASON)

Love-in-a-mist,
I must insist,
Is a better name than Nigella
For a best sella.
To find a Swiss auricula
You must go up in a funicular;
But it's not worth crossing the channel
To find edelweiss like dirty white flannel.

Please do not mention
The gentian:
It is just too
Blue. (MRS. F. M. CORNFORD)

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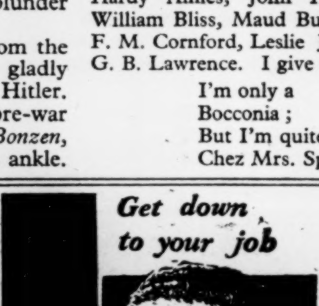

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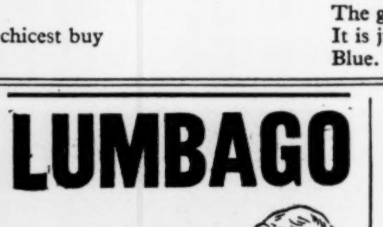

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The Virginia Creeper
Is a light sleeper.
It is quite red with amazement
At what it sees through the casement.

The catkin, rather soured,
Said : " Since that song of Mr. Coward,
Don't you think the London Pride
Has put on side ? " (G. de Vavasour)

Pansies
Are cherished by Franzes and Hanses.
But Heartsease
Is unknown to the Nazis.

The Lobelia
Didn't mean a thing to Ophelia,
Who
Preferred Rue. (Maud Budden)

The Snapdragon is a splendid fellow
In tabard of crimson and yellow.
(When they call him Antirrhinum
I'd like to fine 'em.)

Why Cherry Pie ?
Because it smells like it—that's why.
(And those who call it " Heliotrope "
Deserve the rope.) (William Bliss)

The arum lily
Blushed (the silly !)
On being characterised by Professor Kimball
As a phallic symbol.

The birch
Never goes to church ;
But he is the rule
At school. (Allan M. Laing)

I hear that the yew
Will shortly come under review
Now that the War Office knows
About our shortage of bows.

Any lucky cinchona
Owner
May soon be seen
Cleaning up in quinine.
(Leslie Johnson)

They say that Gherkins,
When crossed with a Dorothy Perkins,
Often produce a flower with such a smell,
Their best friends won't tell.

The Primrose, pale of shade,
Shudders in its forest glade.
To think that its name symbolises the " hopes and glories "
Of a bunch of Tories. (G. B. Lawrence)

The Rose
Has a pleasant effect on the nose—
Or used to, before the passion
For new varieties came into fashion.
(" Little Billee ")

Bellis perennis[1]
Is bad for tennis ;
So is Taraxacum officinale[2]
At a Wimbledon finale.
(R. S. R. Fitter)

The Daisy
Said " Machines drive me crazy ;
Every flower on the lawn
Is beheaded at dawn."
(Gordon Simpson)

Said Browning " Any nose
May ravage with impunity a rose."
Hear the rose in reply,
" To punish—I die."
(Sir Robert Witt)

I often complain
About Elecampane,
But Middleton thinks
It looks lovely with Pinks.
(A. R. Sturrock)

That song about the Daisy
Is completely crazy.
It couldn't look sweet riding at random
About the country on a tandem.
(W. H. Gordon)

Slim pansies
Are used as visiting-cards by chimpanzees
When they pay calls at the villas
Of gorillas. (" Pibwob ")

Why we should admire the Rose
Goodness only knows :
It stinks with cheap scent and looks blowsy—
The whole arrangement's lousy.
(" Dogsbody ")

The grass
Must feel an ass,
To be laid out in swards
And bowled on——at Lord's.
(El. Sub. Lt. R. M. Lang)

The leaf of the fig
On statues is not very big.
By reason of this, Mrs. Grundy
Would prefer sculptors used the Osmundae.
(Robert Gaffikin)

The Lesser Celandine
Is a favourite of mine ;
Of course it takes a poet
Really to love and know it. (N. Kerrod)

The Aspen, you'll notice when out walking,
Never stops talking.
Whereas the Plane, I may remark,
Is known by its *bark*. (Willy Tadpole)

Said the Cabbage : " I suppose
I am something like the Rose ;
But people of taste who have met her
Find me bigger and better. (E. D.)

People who put deodars
In a vase
Make a bad blunder
They are for sitting under. (Phiz)

It is wrong to present Narcissus
To the missus,
Since a youth who gazed into the water
Felt a passion he hadn't oughter.
(J. B. Wood)

Fair Daffodil,
You look quite ill.
You think you're supercilious—
I say, merely bilious.
(Miss M. Hannam)

What a fuss Herrick made
That Rosebuds fade ;
Though really his worry
Was that girls wouldn't hurry.
(Constance Sewell)

The Catalpa's no food
For a pussycat's brood ;
And you wouldn't give a dog any
Mahogany. (Guy Innes)

The common bean
Is full of vitamin ;
Toutefois, donnez-moi
Les petits pois. (R. Cecil Owen)

The French, with their ear
For the queer,
Give a flower of yellow flame
The oddest name. (John Grant)

The most flourishing Shepherd's Purse
Cannot reimburse
One who has had hard knocks
In the matter of Phlox. (" Lamsilon ")

Your antirrhinums
Are jolly fine 'uns :
But you should have seen our show—
A fortnight ago ! (G. A. Shires)

If it's silly
To paint the lily.
Is it stupid to sketch
The vetch ? (G. J. Blundell)

---

[1] Daisy. [2] Dandelion.

Company Meeting

"SHELL" TRANSPORT AND TRADING

VISCOUNT BEARSTED'S STATEMENT

The annual general meeting of The "Shell" Transport and Trading Company, Limited, was held on July 7th, in London, the Right Hon. Viscount Bearsted, M.C. (the chairman) presiding.

The following is an extract from the chairman's statement circulated with the report and accounts:—

The Group's participation in the war effort throughout the world, including the many theatres of military activity, has constantly expanded, and in a war in which petroleum plays such a vital part you will realise how great a responsibility the Group carries. Many countries in which we are interested have become enemy countries or have been overrun by the enemy, and amongst such countries there are some upon which we depended for a certain proportion of our production. It is now that your company feels the benefit of the conservative policy which successive boards have pursued for so many years, and in the opinion of your board, taking into account the reserves which have been made throughout the years, the valuation of your properties appearing in the balance sheet, after allowing for the losses which have taken place from the end of 1941 to date, is fully warranted.

In compliance with the instructions of the Governmental authorities concerned in the different countries, many producing, refining and transportation facilities were destroyed or demolished. In due course, no doubt, compensation will be forthcoming for this demolition, but apart from this you will appreciate that the earning capacities of the Group have been gravely affected and will continue to be affected by the loss of these assets until the time when it proves possible to complete the rebuilding of the Group's oil structure. It will probably be some time after the end of hostilities before the profit-earning capacity of the Group can be fully restored.

TRIBUTE TO CREWS

I am not in a position to reveal any details of the operation of the Group's fleets. The masters, officers and crews of these great fleets of tankers have justly earned the admiration of the authorities and the country as a whole for the gallant operation of their ships under circumstances often involving extreme danger.

In the United States of America the passing of the Lease-Lend Act in March, 1941, established that country as the "Arsenal for the Democracies," and the construction of plants for war requirements, already well under way, gathered momentum as the year progressed. As a result, in December, 1941, when the U.S.A. entered the war, the petroleum industry there had already made preparations which enabled it to meet the still greater demands made upon it.

Shell Union Oil Corporation has moved forward with the industry and has played its full part in accelerating the erection of plants to manufacture the essentials of war. By participating in the construction of both crude oil and product pipelines, Shell Union has made a valuable contribution towards petroleum transportation, perhaps the industry's most serious current problem.

Despite the satisfactory financial results in 1941 and the improvement recorded so far in the current year, the outlook as regards profits must be regarded as uncertain.

The report was adopted.

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said Dr. Thos. Fuller in the seventeenth century

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